Didi Hamann + Reds at the races + Extreme LFC quiz + 1965 FA Cup kings + Xabi on Instagram + Neil Mellor



official liverpool fc monthly magazine

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

"I'm loving my football and all of the lads are really up for the rest of the season"

Raheem REBOOTED

+ **JORDAN HENDERSON**
The vice-captain's team talk

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15



PARK LIFE

The final day of January saw Daniel Sturridge return to action for the first time since August. Not even the sprinkler sytsem at Goodison could disturb his focus ahead of the derby.



JUST BOSS

Patience was the key as Liverpool left it late to beat Bolton in an FA Cup replay last month. Three days later Brendan Rodgers marked 100 league games in charge of the club, overseeing the goalless draw at Everton.



FLAG DAYS

A colourful array of flags and banners on the Kop greeted the Reds as they prepared for Premier League action against West Ham United. Second-half goals from the SAS - Sterling and Sturridge - secured a 2-0 victory.


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1 ROVERS RETURN

Liverpool's reward for beating Crystal Palace in the FA Cup fifth round was a home quarter-final with Blackburn Rovers. The tie was handed to them by ex-Reds boss Roy Hodgson after Brian Finney, son of the late, great Preston forward Tom had pulled Liverpool out of the hat as the home side. The tie will take place at Anfield on Sunday 9 March with the winners going through to a Wembley semi-final date in April. The clubs last met in the competition in January 2000 with Nathan Blake's late goal handing Rovers a 1-0 win in L4.

"A Wembley semi is at stake when Blackburn pay a visit"





2 PIGS MIGHT FLY!

A local broadcaster received an unexpected reply when tasked with hitting the streets of Liverpool ahead of last month's derby duel with Everton. Asking passers-by whether they recalled the 1967 all-Merseyside FA Cup clash at Goodison – which was simultaneously screened at Anfield – he was told by one interviewee: 'Yes, I played in it!' The man in question was none other than Reds goalkeeping great Tommy Lawrence – aka the Flying Pig – one of Shankly's Sixties stars. "I was in goal for Liverpool. It was a great game but Alan Ball scored the winner." Tommy told the somewhat startled reporter. Pure television gold!



POINTS CLEAR

The Reds announce a return Down Under; Anfield prepares for an FA Cup quarter-final and a chance street interview

3 AUSSIE RULES

Liverpool FC will return to Australia for their 2015 pre-season tour – two years after a hugely successful trip fondly remembered for the game at Melbourne Cricket Ground when a 95,000-strong crowd sang You'll Never Walk Alone.

On Friday July 17 this year the Reds will face A-League side Brisbane Roar at the Suncorp Stadium in Queensland before lining up against Adelaide United at the Adelaide Oval the following Monday (20 July) in a fixture which has already sold out.

Meanwhile Philippe Coutinho, pictured here with the Australian flag, has expressed his delight in signing a new long-term contract. The 22-year-old Brazilian says: "I've been made to feel very welcome ever since I arrived at Liverpool. It's a dream-come-true playing for this great club and being part of this squad. Liverpool believed in me, even though I hadn't been playing regularly at my previous club. As I always say, it's a big family and I'm a happy person here."



Standard bearer

Jordan Henderson is relishing the responsibility of helping a vibrant LFC squad meet expectations...

No matter how long the winter, spring is sure to follow. For Liverpool, the old proverb seems appropriate. At Melwood, the shift is illustrative of fortune. This is a place where it feels like there have been two football seasons since August. The first lasted until December, when Liverpool lay torpid. Seeds were planted and since there has been a flourish. Now, Liverpool are almost in full bloom. Something is in the air. There is an audible sense of optimism. May represents several possibilities.

A door that opens from the reception to the boot room, which leads directly to the training pitches, is ajar. As the squad returns inside following a session on a Tuesday afternoon carrying with them the smell of freshly cut grass, there is the slamming of studs against concrete floor, loud voices and collective merriment. A new iPad system has been installed in the changing area and soon, the music is thunderous enough to make the walls quiver. Different accented footballers sing along, the best they can.

On Instagram, Jordan Henderson posts a picture of Jon Flanagan, who appears to have entered a shower wearing his heart monitor. "You can take it off now," he jokes. The following day, Henderson joins Twitter. "Better late than never," he writes.

From a balcony that looks across the rest of the complex's facilities and towards the tower blocks of West Derby, Henderson contemplates why Liverpool's campaign so far has



Fully focused: Jordan is excited by the Reds' winning mentality

been underpinned by extremes. He concedes that he is happier talking now than he was then, when the team's results were, as he admits, "Not what they should have been."

"We got so close to winning the title last May," he pauses. "We were so close to getting over the line…but it didn't happen and around October – November, the performances were not close to the standards we set before."

He believes that early disappointments, which led to a lowly league position and an exit from the UEFA Champions League, coarsened the resolve amongst the players.

"We've worked really hard on the training field and the system the manager has chosen has been good for us, with the squad we've got and the type of player that is here. Hopefully we can keep improving. There's a belief we can finish the season off really strong.

"A lot of it is down to confidence. When you win games and play well, the football comes. The flow is easier. Confidence is huge in any sport. In football, some players have it in abundance and others sometimes need a little push. Here, it's high at the minute. We've got a winning mentality. If we keep that going, it excites me where it might take us."

"When you win games, the flow is a lot easier. Confidence is huge in any sport"

Brendan Rodgers says that Liverpool's system is irrelevant, "It's about a return to identity and style of football." Yet Liverpool's formation is unusual for an English team: three at the back, four in midfield and three up front, two floating just behind the central striker. It has liberated the players. Liverpool's opponents have found it hard dealing particularly with Philippe Coutinho, who is an inside forward rather than a traditional number 10, and "a magician" in Henderson's eyes. In defence, Liverpool have been more solid, especially when dealing with set pieces. The extra man and the extra height has helped.

"We're still working on it, developing how it can become better," Henderson says. "Because you can play the formation and then teams start sussing you out and change their tactics to suit. At Liverpool, you're there to be shot at because we're a big club and everybody wants to beat you.

"A lot of our preparation is on how we can tweak the shape mid-game if things aren't going right. At [Crystal] Palace in the Cup, we had loads of possession in the first half but were behind at half time when the manager moved a few players around. It worked well and we managed to get the two goals to win."

The approach requires versatility. Raheem Sterling has proven himself as a centre forward. Emre Can has become a tough, ball-playing centre half. Lazar Markovic's pace has enabled him to attack and defend as a wing-back. Jordon Ibe has been comfortable in the same unfamiliar role, having been nominated as man of the match in just his second league start for Liverpool, the goalless Merseyside derby at Goodison Park.

"It shows you the quality we've got. You look at Emre and I think the position has suited him perfectly. He's done really well: he is strong, confident in possession and a sensible lad,

"Lazar - in the wing back role, has really adjusted. He's one of the fastest lads in the squad and he's been able to get forwards and backwards without any problems. Raheem has really enjoyed it up front; getting more chances, more goals and creating more. The experience of being up there has moved his game onto another level.

"Then there's Jordon, who has come back from Derby [following a successful loan spell] with the bit



between his teeth. He enjoyed the responsibility of playing every week and he's kicked on. It has given him the confidence and experience that he probably needed. He's been brilliant as well."

Henderson too has moved around. Since Rodgers was appointed as Liverpool's manager, he has played both attacking and defensive roles in the centre of midfield; on the right and left, as a wing-back and at right back. That he was selected only on the substitutes' bench when Rodgers named the team for his first home game (against Manchester City) in 2012 is significant.

"You have to find a way to get into the team," he says. "At Liverpool, you expect the squad to be strong to a level where nobody is guaranteed a start. I think we're close to that level now. You've seen a lot of lads not in the team finding a way to get back. That's healthy."

Moving around the pitch has made Henderson a better all-round player, just as it did for Steven Gerrard, whose positional path has been similar.

"When you play in different roles, your horizons broaden. You understand the game better. Especially if you naturally play in the middle of the park, you develop the mind-set of players in other positions. If you've played on the right (of midfield) and are in the middle, you're more likely to appreciate where the player on



Taking on Chelsea's Eden Hazard

the right will be depending on where the ball is. It also means that you can encourage players in other positions to do the right thing. If you've been there yourself, your words tend to hold that bit more authority.

"In England, I know there's an attitude that you need to pin down your position quickly. But you look at the top, top players in the world now; fellas like Philipp Lahm and Bastian Schweinsteiger. They've moved around a lot. They're still moving around now. They can do it because they're top players.

"You look at Lahm, who's played full back for a long time, and then he's moved into the middle as a deeper midfielder. He's been outstanding whenever I've seen him play there. In football now, I think you need to have the potential to play anywhere. Systems aren't as rigid as they used to be and here at Liverpool ours involves a lot of movement. That helps the team to be a lot less predictable."

Henderson's selflessness should make serve him well as a Liverpool captain. He currently assists Steven

"Stevie always puts the team first, never himself. He is a perfect captain"

Gerrard but when Gerrard leaves for Los Angeles Galaxy in July, there will be a vacancy.

"Stevie's the perfect captain, really. He's a leader on and off the field. He's someone we all look up to; we all can trust. I know everyone says this but until you play with him and until you share a dressing room with him, you might not appreciate the words.

"He always puts the team first. He never puts himself first, always the team. He always thinks about the team and what would be best. He's very unselfish. And he has been that way for many years.

"When I became vice captain, I tried to learn as much from him as I can. If he needed anything, I'd be there to support him. But he's been doing it since he was 23. I've never seen anything unsettle him. How he's handled it from day one is an example to everyone. Being captain of your local team, when your local team is as big as Liverpool – I don't know how he deals with it. It must be very emotional, although he deals with it so well.

"The thing I've probably learnt most from Stevie is the way he overcomes the disappointments. I think that defines you more than anything. I can relate to it. If I look back to the first season here, it wasn't easy. But it made me stronger. I always think of losing the FA Cup (to Chelsea) rather than winning the League Cup (by beating Cardiff City on penalties). It's because we didn't win. A few weeks ago we played Chelsea again in the League Cup semi and came off the pitch knowing we'd given everything. I had a good chance in the away leg, the header. It might have put us through to the final.

"I thought about it for a while. Setbacks like that inspire



you to want more: to progress and to win. There's nothing worse in football than getting all the way to a final then losing. It hurts a lot. I'd like to put that right. The bad times never leave you.

"Next season, we'll see what happens because it might not be me succeeding him [Gerrard], it might be someone else. There are a lot of strong leaders in the dressing room. There are a lot of big characters in the team, down-to-earth humble people. You're seeing that on the pitch. Mama (Sakho), Emre and Skerts (Martin Skrtel) have developed a strong collective understanding. You can see their passion, they're desperate to win; they give everything. Studge is a big character. Lucas is too. I can only do the current job the best I can.

"If I'm captain and Stevie's not there, I don't think about it. I try to play my normal game and do what I'd normally do. I forget that I'm wearing the armband. I'm getting older now and I feel more mature than I did. There are so many young lads in the team, maybe it's come sooner than it might have otherwise. But I do feel the responsibility more, yes."

Henderson's advantage is he's at an age where he could be a long-term captain. He understands the demands.

"When you first come to Liverpool, you know it's a big club. But it's only with time that you realise how big. It's huge – the expectation level more than anything. Obviously there's the fanbase. There is a lot of pressure to win every game. If Liverpool don't win, it's a surprise. There has to be good performances for 60 games a season. At other clubs you might get away with 20. It's all about standards. You can't let them drop."

Henderson believes Liverpool's new players have come to appreciate this quickly. He says the atmosphere at

"Everything is all about winning and the supporters share that spirit too"

Melwood now is more competitive than it has ever been during his time at the club. While this interview is taking place in Melwood's canteen, there is a table tennis competition in the press room. Alberto Moreno is unhappy when Javier Manquillo beats him. A rematch is demanded immediately.

"Everyone has made a big contribution towards the mentality here at the moment. In the games, in training – the small-sides matches; in pool, in table tennis; you're always desperate to win. You can't afford to let someone else get the better of you because if you do, you'll hear about it for the rest of the week. It's all about winning. It helps with the expectation because the fans have the same spirit.

"The atmosphere amongst the lads has been key over the last couple of months. We've stayed really strong. We've fought for each other. If you look at the game against Palace, we went 1-0 down at a ground where we've struggled in the last two seasons. Then we've won 2-1. Before that, against Spurs, we were up twice before they came back but we still got the winner. That shows good character. It's a really healthy dressing room and the boys enjoy spending time together, maybe because it's a young group and we're a similar age.

"We all know football, though, and things can change. We've got to stay tight and keep this run going."

The boss on Jordan

"Jordan is a guy who at the end of last season, when we were in for the title and he was suspended for three games after his sending-off against Manchester City, without telling anyone, went to a club official and offered to do all the media commitments so the others could concentrate on their game.

"He didn't want any glory for it. He was thinking of the team, of all his colleagues who were undertaking a really important spell and he wanted to absorb their duties so they could focus on football.

"That's the type of young man he is. In my time here, he's grown from not just a top-class young player who can only get better, as he embraces different systems and tactics, but he's also developed as a leader, in part by watching Steven Gerrard in the role. And if he becomes the captain next season, he'll carry it out with great honour.

"I remember being sat talking to him for a length of time and it just meant an awful lot to him [to be made vice-captain]. It's not just about putting on an armband, to him it's so much more than that. It's a representation of an iconic club, who over many years have had many great vice-captains, captains and players.

"Watching Steven closely over his time here, Jordan understands the prestige of the role and understands the leadership qualities that are demanded from it. He'll just get better and grow into it because he is very much a team player."



Interview by:

WHEN THE YEAR ENDS IN FIVE



The Reds have enjoyed some great days during the middle of a decade. Test your knowledge to the power of five…



1 In 1995, Kenny Dalglish won the league title for Blackburn at Anfield despite seeing his side lose 2-1 to the Reds on the final day. Can you name the England internationals who were the game's three goalscorers?

2 Liverpool lost only one of their first dozen games of the 1985/86 season. Which team inflicted the only defeat in that sequence?

3 The Reds won their fifth European Cup in 2005 with that memorable comeback against AC Milan. Who were their first opponents in the Champions League that season?

4 How many goals did Liverpool concede on their path to winning their first FA Cup in 1965?

5 In 1985, the Reds took part in the Screen Sport Super Cup. Which two clubs did they meet in the group phase of the competition?

6 Robbie Fowler finished the 1994/95 campaign as the club's leading scorer with 31 goals in all competitions. Who was second on the list with 19?

7 How many games did Liverpool lose at Anfield on their way to winning the Second Division championship in 1905? Was it: **a) 0 b) 2** or **c) 5**

8 In 2005 Liverpool lifted the European Super Cup for the third time. Which team did they defeat 3-1 and who were the goalscorers?

9 Who was made Liverpool captain in 1955 and led the team for three years before handing over the armband to Johnny Wheeler in 1958?

10 Roger Hunt finished the 1964/65 season as Liverpool's top league scorer with 25 goals. Who was second in the Reds' league scorer's chart with six goals? **a) Ian Callaghan b) Ian St John** or **c) Peter Thompson**

11 Who became the club's record signing in July 1995, commanding a reported fee of £8.5 million?



12 Liverpool paid a fee for only one player in the calendar year of 1975. Who?

13 True or false. Liverpool were relegated in 1895 after finishing bottom of Division One?

14 Which Liverpool player was named in the Premier League team of the season for 1994/95?

15 One for real LFC anoraks! Bobby Robinson (pictured bottom) was one of two men who scored 20 league goals in the 1904/05 Second Division winning season. Who was the other?

16 In 1965 Roger Hunt set a record for most goals in a calendar year by a Liverpool player. How many did he score? Was it: **a) 32 b) 37** or **c) 42**

17 Who was named man of the match following Liverpool's 1995 League Cup final triumph against Bolton Wanderers at Wembley?

18 One Liverpool player scored two hat-tricks during 1985. Can you name him?

19 Back to Istanbul in 2005. Who were Liverpool's three successful penalty takers in the shoot-out against AC Milan?


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20 Which team (see right) defeated Liverpool in the final of the 2005 World Club Championship?

21 The picture at the bottom of the page shows Liverpool touring which Spanish islands in 1935?

22 Who scored Liverpool's first Anfield goal of 2015 from open play?

23 Which Liverpool captain won his first international cap in September 1995 and played for England 17 times during his Anfield career?

24 In August 1965 Liverpool shared the FA Charity Shield with which club following a 2-2 draw?

25 In May 1995, Liverpool played an end-of-season friendly at Lansdowne Road to mark the centenary of which Irish club?

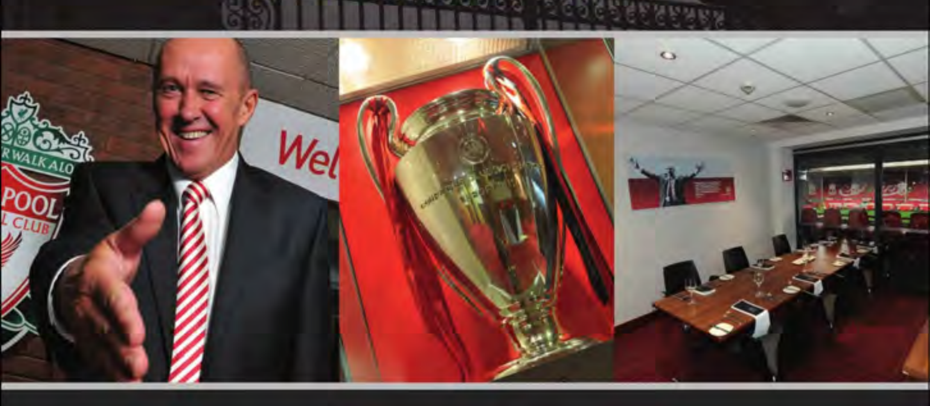




Answers: **1** Alan Shearer, John Barnes and Jamie Redknapp **2** Newcastle United **3** Grazer AK **4** Three **5** Southampton and Tottenham Hotspur **6** Ian Rush **7** a) 0 **8** CSKA Moscow; Djibril Cisse (2) and Luis Garcia. **9** Billy Liddell **10** a) Ian Callaghan **11** Stan Collymore **12** Joey Jones **13** True **14** Rob Jones **15** Bobby Robinson and Jack Parkinson **16** b) 37 **17** Steve McManaman **18** John Wark **19** Didi Hamann, Djibril Cisse and Vladimir Smicer **20** Sao Paulo **21** Canary Islands **22** Raheem Sterling **23** Jamie Redknapp **24** Manchester United **25** University College Dublin

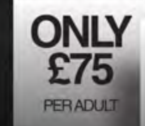
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THE WAY TO San Jose

Mikel San Jose left Liverpool in 2009 to return to Athletic Bilbao. The centre-back has since become a regular in the Basque club's line-up and made his full Spain debut earlier this season. Glenn Price caught up with the ex-Reds reserve...



Mikel (third from left) in a LFC first-team pre-season training camp in Switzerland in July 2009

Looking back at Mikel San Jose's brief spell on Merseyside may not make much reading in terms of impact: as a teenager the Basque centre-half was highly regarded by those who coached him at Liverpool FC's Academy between 2007 and 2009, but he never managed to make a first-team appearance.

Back at Athletic Bilbao, however, he's since developed into a composed defender with an ability to push up into midfield and score the odd goal from the penalty spot too; a player who could help improve any team and perhaps thrive, indeed, in the way the current Liverpool side sets up.

Another way of looking at it, though, is to conclude that his period with the Reds was invaluable in that it helped to mould him into the footballer he is today. One thing is for sure: sometimes there's no place like home; no greater sense of security than the environment in which you feel most comfortable.

It's why Steven Gerrard still found it tough to announce his forthcoming leaving of Liverpool after so many years of legendary service, and also why team-mate Rickie Lambert chose to rebuff the opportunity of regular first-team football in the January transfer window to fight for a place at his boyhood club.

The same can be said for San Jose who left Liverpool in August 2009 for Athletic Bilbao, for whom he'd previously been a junior player.

"Being Basque and playing for Athletic Club is just the best," says Mikel, whose fondness and respect for LFC nonetheless shines through this phone interview. "It wasn't that difficult to leave. I was a Liverpool player but I knew my future wasn't there. I went home to the club I always dreamt of playing for since I was a child."

"I thought all about Liverpool's history, the great players they'd had"

The story of Athletic Bilbao is arguably under-appreciated by some. To continue to be as competitive and successful as they have – using players only from the Basque region – is something to admire in modern football. San Jose continues: "It's incredible to play for Bilbao. Our great philosophy makes it so different from all other clubs. We fight against big clubs. In the past few years we've reached two finals [the 2012 UEFA Europa League and the Spanish Copa del Rey] and tried to give a title to all our people. We haven't done that yet but all of us [players and supporters] dream of that."

Eight years ago, for all of his local pride, San Jose still found it impossible to rebuff Rafael Benitez's Liverpool at the age of 18, and he duly signed a three-year deal with the club in the summer of 2007. "It was unbelievable when one of the best teams in the world knocked on my door," he admits. "I never expected something like that. It wasn't an easy decision and I spent a lot of time thinking upon it. But I was so attracted by the history of the club, all the great players who

"It was hard to believe when LFC knocked on my door"



Playing in a pre-season friendly at Anfield in August 2009

played [for Liverpool] and were playing for them then; then there was Anfield and its incredible atmosphere. It's a really big club in football and a big family with everyone pulling in the same way.

"I felt confident in Rafa Benitez. He's really incredible – a great coach who always makes players and his teams better. I'm really thankful to him for the chance he gave me and the confidence he put in me.

"The worst thing was what felt like turning my back on my town, my family, my friends, and a lot of people that I loved. But everything was much easier thanks to John and Sue [the local Liverpool couple who looked after him]. They accepted me into their home in my first year. I owe them so much. There was great attention given to me from every person at the club. I had a lot of English lessons and I studied hard to feel better and to become more a part of the team, the club and the city."

Despite the confidence that the manager had in him, San Jose never made that elusive senior breakthrough with the Reds, but he did earn himself

a place on the bench for one league game in February 2008. "That was a great experience," he recalls. "Six months after playing for Athletic's Under-18s I was on bench at Stamford Bridge in the Premier League! I was in the same squad with Carragher, Gerrard, Xabi Alonso, Javier Mascherano, and up against John Terry, Frank Lampard, Didier Drogba. It was amazing. At that moment Liverpool-Chelsea was one of best fixtures in the world and still is today."

San Jose was an important player for Liverpool's reserves during that period. His reserve-team manager, the late Gary Ablett, was aware of his talent. Ablett said at the time: "He has an eye for a pass, good composure on the ball, he's physically strong and can compete against the more robust forwards. He can also use his brain to deal with the smaller, quicker ones, so he's another one who is going to be a very good player."

The 25-year-old looks back with

"When I arrived I was looked after so well and learned English"

fondness on his spell with Liverpool's second string. "It was a great time playing in the reserves. I played a lot of games. We won the English reserves title against Aston Villa in my first year, winning the final at Anfield 3-0. Those two years were fantastic. There were lots of really nice people in the team, coming from all around the world.

"All my love from here goes to Gary Ablett's family. He was really important for me – a great coach who gave me massive support in my years at Liverpool. I felt so sad when I heard about his passing."

The lure of home was something that Mikel just could not resist and he returned to Athletic, initially on loan, before the deal was made permanent in 2010. A long career with LFC just wasn't to be. "Obviously I'm sad [about that]. When I made the decision to join Liverpool I fought hard to be a part of the first team and to become an important figure. I didn't manage to do that, but then a lot of the best players around the world played for Liverpool at that time.

"After two years in the reserves, both myself and Rafa knew that I needed more and I deserved more. There wasn't a place in the side for me at Liverpool. It wasn't easy at the beginning when I rejoined Athletic, but I had support from a lot of people who love me and I just kept working hard. I'd only played just a few minutes until the December, but after that I played in most of the games that year.

"This season for me, particularly, is going well. In the last few months



Champions League action for Athletic v Porto last November

I've been playing a lot of matches for Athletic Club and have scored six goals. We're not in the best position in the league and we expected to do better, but we're fighting to get higher in the table.

"We've reached the semi-finals of the Copa Del Rey and we're in the Europa League [at the time of going to press Bilbao were in the middle of a round-of-32 tie with Torino] and obviously have a lot of focus on that."

As is the case with most players who leave LFC, affiliations still remain strong. And that's no different, even now. "I watch every Liverpool game that I can, enjoying and supporting," he says. "Last season was unbelievable. It was very exciting as every game was a big step towards trying to win the league after a lot of years. The club deserved it and Steven Gerrard deserved it too.

"I still watch out for my old team-mates too. I enjoyed watching Stephen Darby's Bradford beating Chelsea in the FA Cup, and I look out for Jay Spearing at Blackburn and Dani Ayala at Middlesbrough. I also watched Dean Bouzanis [goalkeeper at Western Sydney Wanderers] playing in the last Club World Championship.


Tracking Real's Ronaldo in La Liga



"I'm enjoying playing in La Liga against Alvaro Arbeloa [Real Madrid], Mascherano [Barcelona], Nabil El Zhar [Levante] and also Xabi Alonso before he left for Bayern Munich. I know where all my team-mates from Liverpool are and I'd love to have more contact with all of them."

As for the future? "You never know what lies ahead. A lot of things could happen, but I believe my place and my future are here at Athletic Bilbao.

"Liverpool and Bilbao were both in the last 32 of the Europa League, so I was hoping we would beat Torino and Liverpool would overcome Besiktas as it would be amazing to play against them. Two teams with great histories, incredible supporters and atmospheres at Anfield and San Mames. I feel privileged to have been involved with both clubs and I know I'll never walk alone."

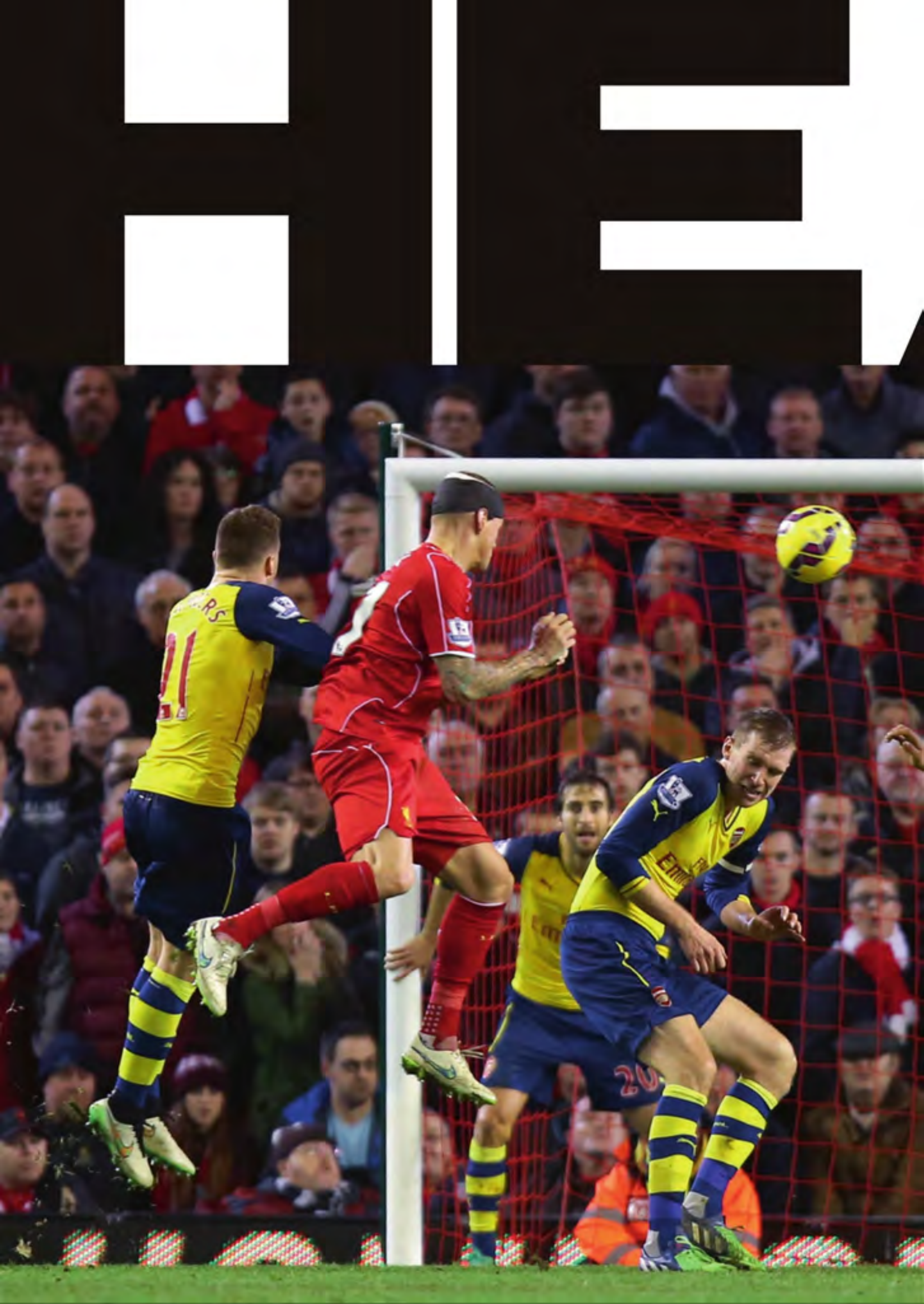
"I keep in touch with old team-mates and look out for LFC's scores"

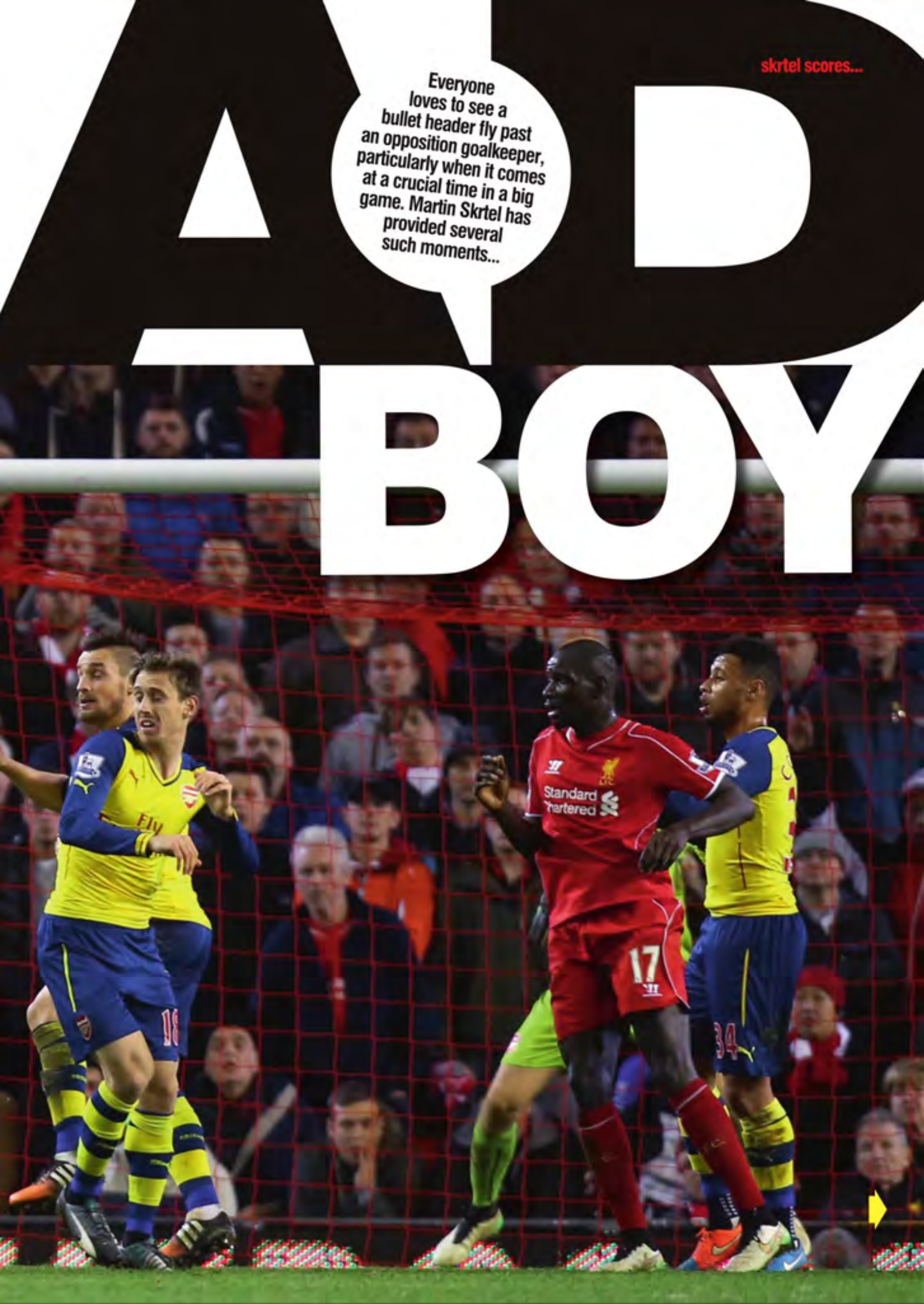
NATIONAL SERVICE

The displays of Pamplona-born Mikel in the heart of the Bilbao backline have also earned him recognition at international level. He was capped 16 times at Under-19s level and a further eight times by the U21s. Then, in 2012, he was picked for the Spanish U23s.

Earlier this 2014/15 season his consistently high club performances were rewarded when he was named by Vicente del Bosque in his 23-man squad for matches against France and Macedonia. He made his full debut in the September friendly against France in Paris. The home side won the game 1-0 thanks to a goal from Loic Remy. San Jose played the full 90 minutes. Current Reds centre-back Mamadou Sakho was in the French line-up.




HE



AD BOY

Everyone loves to see a bullet header fly past an opposition goalkeeper, particularly when it comes at a crucial time in a big game. Martin Skrtel has provided several such moments...

THREE OF THE BEST FROM 2014





February 8, 2014
Liverpool 5 Arsenal 1

Surely Skrtel's best Liverpool goal? Having already put us 1-0 up inside the first 60 seconds, he doubled the advantage on ten minutes. Steven Gerrard's outswinging corner meant there was still plenty for the Slovakian to do as he moved towards it at pace.

His determination allowed him to get in front of Laurent Koscielny and divert the ball towards the far post, where it dipped just under the crossbar. It was the perfect beginning to one of the best Anfield victories of recent times.

April 13, 2014
Liverpool 3 Man City 2

Joe Hart had just acrobatically tipped over a Gerrard header but there was nothing the England goalkeeper could do when Skrtel found the net through the same method.

The centre-back's clever run to the near post allowed him to get away from marker Vincent Kompany and in front of Gael Clichy. From there he was able to redirect Gerrard's corner across goal and in to the net. It was the seventh time Skrtel's name appeared on the score-sheet in 2013/14 – his most productive goalscoring campaign so far.





December 21, 2014
Liverpool 2 Arsenal 2

The seventh minute of injury time had begun when Adam Lallana took a corner at the Kop end. Behind the goal, fans urged the home team to produce one last attempt that would bring an equaliser.

Skrtel responded to their promptings by climbing high to direct the ball past Wojciech Szczesny and into the net. It completed an eventful day for the Slovakian who had earlier required numerous stitches to a head wound.









Skrtel's goals have come in: Premier League 15 FA Cup 1 League Cup 1 And via: Header 10 Right foot 4 Left foot 3

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Being able to play in a number of roles is a big part of modern football

Didi HAMANN



When I watched Emre Can play for Bayer Leverkusen last season one of his stand-out qualities was the ability to perform a number of different roles. Bayer had a lot of injuries, so at one point or another he seemed to fill almost every position on the pitch.

That versatility has been demonstrated again here at Liverpool. And not only has he done different jobs for the team, he's done each task very well. I would go as far as saying his performances have been one of the reasons why the team has climbed the table.

Playing in different roles isn't straightforward. I remember a game against Aston Villa where Gerard Houllier asked me to operate on the left wing. He'd identified Steve Stone as one of their biggest threats and wanted me to help out our full-back.

We won 3-1, with Michael Owen scoring a hat-trick in the first half-hour, although I'm not sure how much of that was down to me.

I was able to cope with being out wide because I think I've got a decent understanding of the game. Some players aren't so comfortable with switching roles. It's just not for them and they'll tell the manager that.

Others will just go and give it their best because they know it's a chance to get in the starting eleven. I don't think Lazar Markovic had ever played as a wing-back before joining us and it's not Jordon Ibe's natural position either. But both have adapted well.

They've realised that any chance to play in the Liverpool team – even if it's not in your preferred position – has to be grabbed. Jamie Carragher and Steven Gerrard did exactly the same.

I played a few games in central midfield alongside Carra. And when

"Emre Can leads like Stevie – you won't see him him screaming at people"



Emre's form has been a major factor in the team's 2015 resurgence

we had one of the best centre-back pairings around with Sami Hyypia and Stephane Henchoz, Jamie was in the side as a full-back. It was only later on that he got in the team in the middle of the defence and thrived.

Stevie had similar experiences. We had lots of competition for places in the middle of the park. At one point there was me, Danny Murphy, Jamie Redknapp and Gary McAllister. So Stevie sometimes played at full-back and on the right wing.

Gerard Houllier knew what Carra and Stevie could offer. That's why he always tried to get them in the team, even in unfamiliar roles.

Being versatile is a great asset in the early stages of your career because it can earn you an initial chance. The only danger is you get taken for granted. You need to eventually make one position your own.

Long-term I see Emre Can operating as a central midfielder. For now he's doing a fine job where he is. His ability to bring the ball forward and produce decisive passes is a great asset for the team. My only major concern about him playing in defence was how he'd deal with the physicality of the English game. The Premier League has huge powerful strikers like Romelu Lukaku and Andy Carroll. There aren't many of those types in the Bundesliga and I did wonder how Can would cope. So far though he's dealt with it very well.

Another element of his game that I like is his leadership qualities. When people talk about leaders they usually imagine someone shouting at team-mates. It's not about that. Stevie has never behaved that way. He's always led by example, giving great performances every week.

Can is similar. You won't see him screaming at players. Instead, he just gets on with his job of playing well and helping the team to win, no matter which role he is asked to perform.

Follow Didi on Twitter @DietmarHamann

HUNGER GAMES

Reds ace Raheem Sterling on this season's steep learning curve. Interview by Simon Hughes


WARRIOR.
31
L.F.C.

You seem to be enjoying your football at the moment...

Yeah, I am. It has been brilliant since Christmas. The balance of the team is good. We're creating lots of chances. The players at the back are comfortable on the ball and that sets us up. Emre [Can] being there has helped a lot because he drives into the midfield and increases the tempo straightaway. With the wing-backs [formation] everyone is on the same wavelength. So much of football is about creating angles and space. Playing 3-4-3, it means that wherever you play you've always got at least two options. The pitch opens up.

Why has Liverpool's form turned so dramatically in 2015?

I don't think it's down to one reason. It's loads of things coming together at the same time. Confidence is a big thing. The lads are really up for it at this moment in time. More than anything it shows that we're really bonding. We've got whatever it was at the start of the season out of our system. Everyone is playing their part. You can see the hunger to win games. Everyone is pressing the opposition, closing them down. We all go together.

Your success as a centre-forward has been a big bonus...

Playing for Liverpool, you have to be ready to play in any position. You can't afford to think you are settled in any area of the pitch. When I was at the Academy I started most games on the left wing. I have to be honest that at the time I thought that if I progressed to the first team, that's where I'd end up. But in the last 18 months I've played right-wing, as a number 10 and even as a right-back. It has really opened up my mind. I'm still young so all of this experience, I hope, is helping me become a better player generally. I'm always thinking and learning. I've probably felt most comfortable in myself as a no10 but as long as the team is getting results I'm happy. It doesn't matter where I play.

Do you consider yourself as a false no9 or as an out-and-out striker?

I just do what I think is right at the time, and trust myself. Sometimes I'll play on the shoulder of the last man and sometimes I'll drop deeper to create space for others to run in behind. I try as much as I can to get into the box. That's what Studge does so well and it works for the team so I try and do the same. I know [Lionel] Messi has kind of invented that role but there's only one Lionel Messi isn't there?



"So much about football involves creating angles and space"

"Pressure is a good thing – I just try to play like I did as a teenager"

Does it excite you that in terms of positions, you are following the same path as Messi, indeed, or Ronaldo and Bale - players that can perform any attacking role?
I've honestly never thought about it. I have faith that I can take my football up a level or two with a bit of time. If you don't have that faith, what's the point? Once I get my finishing I know I can kick on and do better. I need to stop over-thinking when I get into good areas and take my time, more care; go with my instinct. We've played a lot of games recently and there hasn't been as much training time so I suppose I've been learning on the job: whether to strike a shot hard or curl it in a match situation. Maybe it's the best way because it's got the biggest pressure. But we've got more gaps between games over the next month or so and I'll be using that time trying to get better with my finishing. All the lads here want to improve and I'm no different.

Do you feel pressure?
[Smiling] No, no. It's a nice pressure. Pressure is a good thing. I'm 20 and I'm enjoying my football. What's the point in doing something if you don't enjoy it? All I want to do is get on the pitch and dribble at defenders – take them on and get crosses in, score goals. I try to play football in the same way I did when I was a teenager with my friends at home. I don't think too much about what the critics or the doubters say. All I do is the best I can. It's the same if someone compliments you. Take no notice and crack on.

You never seem daunted playing against big, powerful defenders...
I'm not, not at all. I focus on myself – what I can do. I try to use my pace. I only think about how I can come out on top. You have to respect your opponent because the standard is so high and you know that you have to play to your maximum to affect what happens. The manager briefs us about the other team: their strengths and weaknesses, but the bigger focus is always on what we do. I look at football that way.



The sport science team at Liverpool FC say that, pound for pound, you're the strongest player in the squad...

I did a lot of gym work at the start of the season but it's important not to go too big because you need to be a natural size to perform to your best. You don't want to lose an edge, like pace, just for the sake of being a few pounds more powerful. I feel comfortable with my body now. I feel confident going into one-to-one duels with defenders.

There was some criticism at the time of the club's decision to allow you a break in Jamaica in January but it has clearly helped you...

"I came back fresh after the break, it definitely recharged me"

It's definitely helped me. Not just on the physical side of things because we played a lot of games over Christmas, but on the mental side too. I've benefited from it. It was a week where I didn't think about football. I watched the games on TV but aside from that, it allowed me to recharge my batteries. My mum's got a house in Kingston [Jamaica] and I spent a bit of time there as well as relaxing on the beach. It was really chilled out. I spoke with the manager about it at the start of the season and it was always the plan for me to do it. I suppose it's for others to say whether I've kicked on, but since coming back I've felt fresh and ready to take on the rest of the season.

Are there any parts of your game where you think you can improve?

Yeah, definitely. I've scored 10 goals this season and nobody needs to tell me because I know my finishing needs to get better. I'd like more goals. The record so far is not bad but it could be better. I reckon I could have had 15 if I'd taken all of my chances. It's not something I dwell on because I know I'm still developing. But I want to get to a situation where I'm finishing my chances without even thinking about it.

In terms of lessons, what has this season taught you?

It's about the ups and downs in football. Nothing goes in a straight line. I know now that you have to treat the good times and the bad the same way – not to get ahead of yourself or get too down – to stay determined. There have been times when the team has received a bit of stick and times like now where it's a bit better and you're getting pats on the back. I've learnt football is fickle and attitudes change. At the moment it feels like we're going to finish the season strongly but the only way that will happen is if we concentrate on the moment.

What about Jordon Ibe – he's a similar player to you and is doing well...

He's been great. The manager made a good decision to send him to Derby County – a team that plays good football – because he's come back here to Liverpool and slotted in straightaway as if he's always been there. It's a credit to him. I'm really happy for him.

Supporters might think the two of you could forge a big part of Liverpool's future...

We're similar players with similar backgrounds. We both like to get at defenders. But Jordon's a lot bigger – stronger – than me and probably quicker as well. We've got similar attitudes, taking it day by day. We're always talking as we're experiencing similar things. I tell him to do what he's always done with the Under-18s or reserves: to have the confidence to take his man on. When you first come into the team, it can be tempting to let the senior players take charge. But you've got to do your own thing and he's doing that.



"There are so many games to play but I've learned to take it day by day"

When you think about your Liverpool career so far, what do you consider as your happiest moment?

My debut, for sure. It was something I always dreamed of – playing at the highest level for a big club. I came here from Queens Park Rangers as a 15-year-old and nothing was guaranteed. I didn't think that, because Liverpool had tried so hard to get me, it would automatically result in me playing for the first team. There was a lot of uncertainty. Obviously I didn't know anyone really, and everything was new to me. Making a first-team debut seemed a long, long way away. So when I got there, it felt brilliant. And I was pleased for my family – my mum – because she helped me so much.

If you were to win a trophy with Liverpool do you think your answer might change?

Yeah, definitely. The debut was a big stepping-stone but I haven't won anything yet. As a player I'd love to experience that – winning a trophy. There's a belief among all the boys here that we can do that. I think it would kick us on as well. Once you've tasted some success it gives you the confidence to do it again. Confidence is massive in football, as I said before.

Towards the end of March and start of April there are games with Man United and Arsenal. How much do you look forward to occasions like these?

They're big teams and the results against them will show where we're at. I know everybody says this but we can't afford to look too far ahead. There are so many games to play. I've learnt to take it day by day. It doesn't matter if we're playing Man United or an FA Cup match against a lower-league team, the focus has to be there. At Liverpool you're expected to win every game so every time you step onto the pitch it's an important occasion. You can't prioritise, although I understand why – for the supporters – they look towards United and Arsenal.

Sterling...scores!



Jordon on Raheem

To the date, fellow young Liverpool ace Jordon Ibe is exactly 12 months younger than 20-year-old Raheem Sterling.

The winger, who has been in fine form since returning to Liverpool from Derby County following a successful loan spell, believes he can learn from his team-mates experiences.

Sterling has become one of the most important players for club and country and Ibe is determined to follow the same path.

"Raheem has been a really big influence," Ibe says. "He has been helping me and we talk off the pitch and he gives me advice. He is a player whom I look up to. He is a year older than me and it gives me a lot of confidence to try and achieve what he has achieved at such a young age.

"We have similar music tastes and spend a lot of time off the pitch together.

"On the pitch, I love watching him play. He's so versatile and is an example to everyone."



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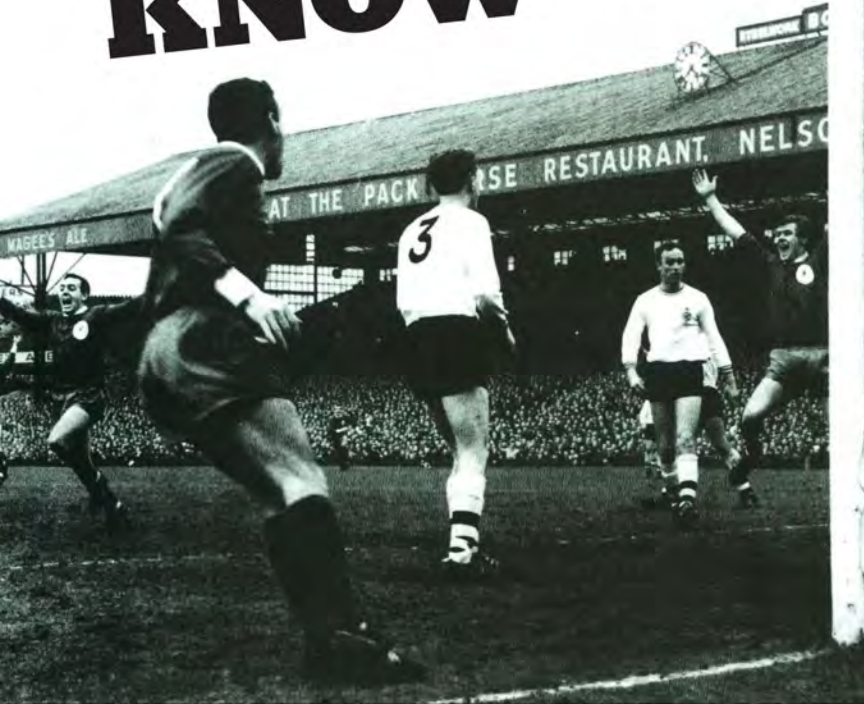
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"WHAT I WAS DOING IN THE SIX YARD BOX, I DON'T KNOW"

Next in our series celebrating half-a-century since Liverpool FC first won the FA Cup: a tricky fifth round tie at Bolton Wanderers…



Modern-day television dramas often start with a recap of previous episodes.

A series on Liverpool's 1965 FA Cup run would have producers scrambling over what to omit from the obligatory memory-jogger.

The Reds' third round trip to West Brom had seen their captain Ron Yeats concede a penalty when he had picked the ball up after hearing a whistle which turned out to have come from the crowd.

Round four had drawn them at home to the Football League's bottom club. Surely a formality, manager Bill Shankly missed the game in favour of a scouting mission in Germany. On his return, Shanks discovered that a replay was next on his team's agenda in order to book their place in the final 16 of the competition.

Still, victory over Stockport County had finally been secured and the Reds were still on track in their bid to end a 73-year wait to win the FA Cup.

Next up was another trip to lower-ranked opponents and more drama was on its way.

Bolton Wanderers had been relegated to the Second Division (the Championship as it is known today) the previous season and were pushing for promotion back to the top-flight under manager Bill Ridding.

"By now, FA Cup fever was sweeping through the red half of Merseyside"



The matchday programme produced by Bolton for the game

The Trotters' Heswall-born boss had previously guided Wanderers to FA Cup glory in 1958. Of that side only goalkeeper [Eddie] Hopkinson and full-back [Roy] Hartle remained but Bolton were hopeful of further success as they welcomed Shankly's side to Burnden Park having defeated the previous season's beaten finalists, Preston North End, away from home in the fourth round.

By now FA Cup fever was sweeping through the red half of Merseyside. Liverpool was now the city's sole representative in the competition [Everton had lost at home in the previous round to eventual finalists Leeds] and interest in the game at Bolton was phenomenal.

Liverpool received an allocation of 20,000 tickets but even that was not enough to satisfy the huge demands of their cup-crazy fans. Season-ticket holders snapped up their allocation in no time and chaotic scenes greeted the sale of the remaining 7,000 at Anfield. Many fans took time off work and queues began to form during the early hours. However, by the time the ticket office opened the queues had quadrupled and there were scenes of panic as the crowds grew bigger. The majority went home empty-handed.

The game at Burnden Park came in the middle of a busy period of league and European Cup action for the Reds. They were gradually moving up the Division One table and a creditable goalless draw away to Cologne had made Shankly's side firm favourites to reach the last four in their inaugural European Cup campaign.

Having beaten Wolves in the game before they headed to Bolton, Liverpool were unbeaten in 19 games but their confidence was also tempered by a hint of caution.

In Mark Platt's excellent book Cup Kings 65, Ian Callaghan said: "Going away from home in the cup was

PHILMAR FOOTBALL FAN KIT

IAN CALLAGHAN

always difficult. When the draw was made you always wanted your team to come out of the bag first. With Bolton being in the Second Division we didn't know much about them, although we would of course have had them watched in the weeks leading up to the match. They were a good side and we knew it was going to be tough."

Most of the pre-match build-up in the press had focused on the battle between Yeats and Bolton centre forward Wyn 'The Leap' Davies.

Shankly was forced to make his first team change in eight games when Gordon Milne was declared unfit. Tommy Smith moved into his slot at half-back with Alf Arrowsmith being fielded in the forward line.

Liverpool went into the match knowing they would enjoy the significant backing of the vast swathes of the travelling Kop. Bolton's matchday programme stated: 'Liverpool's Kopites are among the most knowledgeable spectators in the land; they create atmosphere before and during a match that compels players to give their best.'

However, a biting, swirling wind made for a scrappy opening.

Smith tested the keeper from 30 yards with a rare effort on goal, while Gordon Taylor (now chief executive of the PFA) sent in a free-kick from which

"Kopites are among the most informed spectators in the land"

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Liverpool Echo and Evening Express

FINAL

CALLAGHAN'S GOAL PUTS REDS IN LAST EIGHT

Liverpool Stamina Told Tale At Bolton

BOLTON 0 LIVERPOOL 1

MICHAEL CHARTERS

Pickering Free-kick Hit The Jackpot

SHEFFIELD WED. 0, EVERTON 1

UNITED WIN WITH LATE GOALS

Crerand And Law Score

How They Stand

To-day's Racing

NEWBURY



Bolton boss Bill Ridding and Nat Lofthouse with the FA Cup

Davies headed narrowly over the crossbar for the hosts.

The game hung finely in the balance at the interval. Neither side had created any other notable scoring opportunities. Yet as the second half wore on Liverpool gradually gained the upper hand.

Five minutes remained when Peter Thompson collected the ball out on the left wing. There seemed to be no apparent danger at first and then, in an instant, he switched the ball to his right foot and floated an inviting centre across for Ian Callaghan to nod past Hopkinson to the delight of the numerous Liverpool supporters.

Speaking in Cup Kings 65, Cally recalled: "I was aware there wasn't long to go. What I was doing in the six-yard box, I don't know. Normally Roger or the Saint would be in there. It was a great cross, straight to my head and I managed to put it in."

Amid the celebrations, a wooden

A happy Kopite poster displayed at the recent 1965 FA Cup reunion

barrier behind the goal into which Cally had scored collapsed due to the pressure of the crowd. Police and ambulancemen were immediately at the scene and no-one was injured.

There was barely time for Bolton to launch a comeback and Liverpool duly saw out the final minutes to secure their place in the last eight for the third successive season.



Those previous two campaigns had seen Liverpool dealt tough lessons however. In 1963 they had gone out at the semi-final stage as a Leicester City side inspired by the goalkeeping of Gordon Banks had beaten them 1-0 with a goal from Mike Stringfellow.

A year later, the Reds went out in the quarter-finals at the hands of little-fancied Swansea Town, beaten 2-1 at Anfield in one of the biggest shocks of that particular season.

And, for Shankly's class of '65, the road to Wembley was not about to get any easier.

The draw presented them with a trip to Filbert Street to tackle Leicester again and the knowledge that this time they would have to find a way past Banks if they were to take another step closer to the Twin Towers.

match facts & statistics

BOLTON WANDERERS 0
LIVERPOOL 1
FA CUP FIFTH ROUND
20.02.65 BURNDEN PARK

Goal: Callaghan (85)
Attendance: 57,207
Referee: TW Dawes
Bolton: Hopkinson; Hartle, Farrimond; Rimmer, Edwards, Hatton, Lee, Hill, Davies, Bromley, Taylor.
Liverpool: Lawrence; Lawler, Byrne; Smith, Yeats, Stevenson; Callaghan, Hunt, St John, Arrowsmith, Thompson.

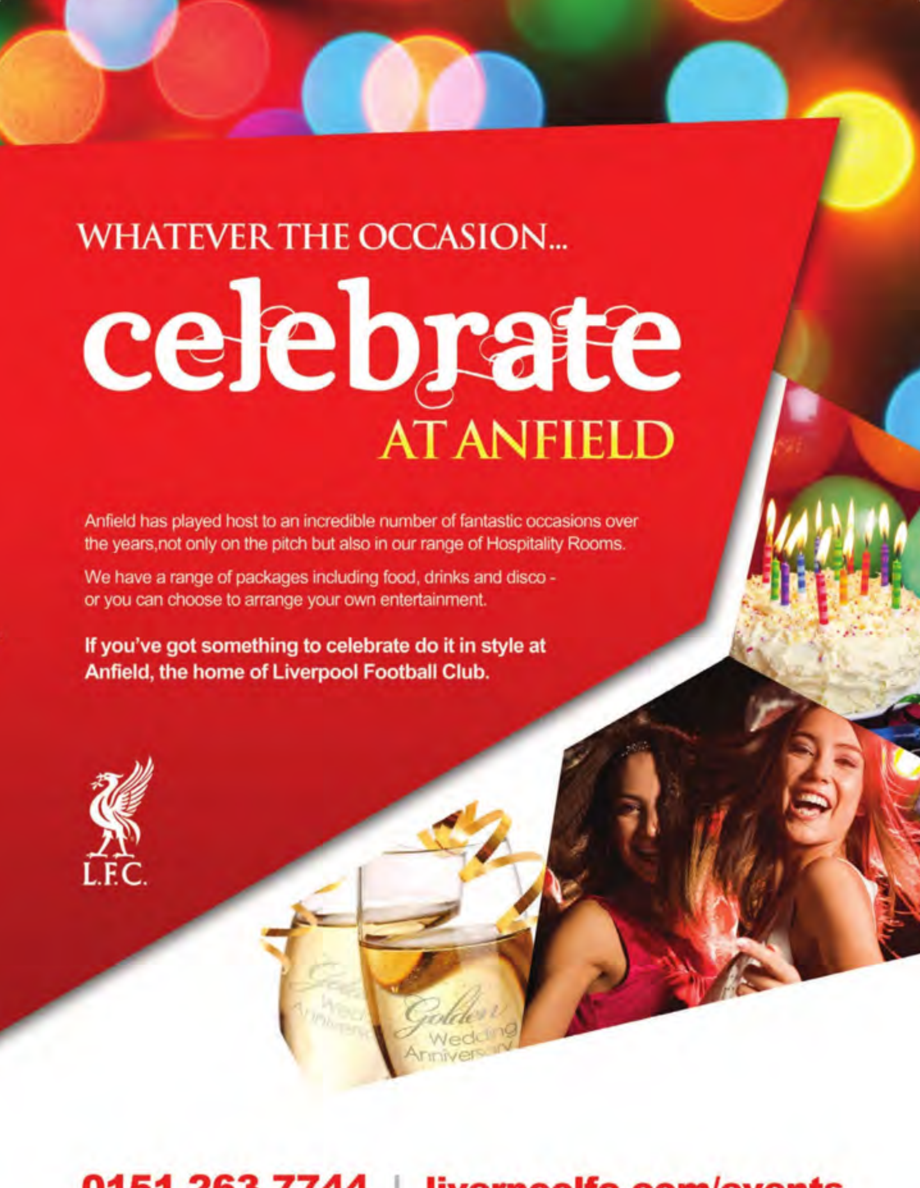
FIFTH ROUND RESULTS

Aston Villa 1 Wolves 1
Wolves 0 Aston Villa 0 (replay)
Aston Villa 1 Wolves 3 (second replay)
Bolton 0 Liverpool 1
Middlesbrough 0 Leicester City 3
Manchester United 2 Burnley 1
Crystal Palace 3 Nottingham Forest 1
Chelsea 1 Tottenham Hotspur 0
Leeds United 2 Shrewsbury Town 0
Peterborough United 0 Swansea Town 0
Swansea Town 0 Peterborough United 2 (replay)

Get the book

Mark Platt's book Cup Kings: Liverpool 1965 is now available as an ebook to commemorate the 50th anniversary of one of the greatest days in the club's history. A must-read for all Reds, it re-lives that unforgettable cup run as the Reds ended a 73-year hoodoo without success in the tournament. The book includes a comprehensive round-by-round account including interviews with the key players. It is available now from Amazon, priced £5.99.




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los tres amigos

Madger Gomes, Sergi Canos and Pedro Chirivella have added a Spanish flavour to Liverpool's Academy line-ups this season. John Hynes meets them



What position do you normally play?

Madger Gomes: Midfield, or wherever the manager wants me to play.

Sergi Canos: Striker, or I can play on the wing too.

Pedro Chirivella: Midfield.

Who did you play for in Spain before arriving here?

PC: I was a player at Valencia from around the age of seven until the Under-16s. Then I moved to Liverpool in 2013.

SC: I'm from Nules, a place just outside Valencia. But I was with Barcelona before I came here.

MG: I joined Liverpool from Villarreal back in January.

Moving to a new country as a teenager can't have been a simple decision...

MG: No, it wasn't. I knew I'd be leaving my family and friends behind.

SC: I needed a lot of time to think about the decision. I wanted to talk to my family and coaches about it before I made up my mind.

PC: I knew I would be giving up some parts of my life in Spain but I thought it would be worth it.

MG: When I knew I had the possibility of coming here I spoke to Pedro and Sergi and they told me what a good club this is, so that helped me to decide.

"Since I arrived I've had fans Tweeting: welcome to Liverpool, lad!"

So are Pedro and Sergi helping you settle in, Madger?

SC: We have to look after him and show him around – we're like his big brothers!

MG: It's been great to have them here and other Spanish players at the club too.

PC: Yes; Alberto Moreno and Javier Manquillo are very friendly and funny.

SC: They're crazy, always laughing. It's great to see them in the first team even though they are still young.

PC: Jose Enrique has been a big help too. And I still speak about football to players who I knew at Valencia. I was in the academy there with Gaya and Paco Alcacer. Both of them are doing very well in the Valencia first team now and we talk quite a lot.

Is the level of interest from the fans different here to what you'd experienced previously?

MG: Definitely. I arrived on deadline day. Since then I've had fans sending me messages on Twitter and wishing me good luck or saying: welcome to Liverpool, lad.

PC: I remember when I signed the number of people who follow me on Twitter increased in a huge way. It's crazy.

SC: I came to Liverpool for many reasons, and the fans were definitely one of those. I joined the U18s and couldn't believe how interested the people are. I can only imagine what it must be like if you are coming to play in the first team here.

You've all played for Spain...

MG: Yeah, I've played for the U15s, U16s and U17s.

SC: And I've been involved in the same teams.

PC: I've played for the U16s, U17s and U18s.

"If a side is winning in Spain they slow it down – here it never stops"

So what's the biggest difference between Spain and England?

PC: The weather!

MG: Definitely.

SC: It's crazy. I can get up in the morning and see it's sunny. So I go in to town and when I get there it's raining or there is a storm. The sunshine has vanished.

MG: It rains a lot. But we can't change that. We just have to get on with it.

Pedro in the Spanish national flag and in Academy action (below)

How does the football differ?

SC: The game here in England is much more physical. That's obviously good in some ways, because you learn to handle it.

MG: There is also the pace. I think English football is so quick, it's non-stop. And there is the jump from U18 to U21s, that is quicker again. The tempo goes up each time.

PC: It never stops here, from start to finish. If a side is winning in Spain they slow the game down. Here players don't really do that.

SC: In Spain it would be almost impossible to lose a three or four-goal lead. Whereas in England, because the game is played at such high pace, you could see big lead disappear in the space of 20 minutes. I think it's instinct to play the game that way in this country. People are used to it.

PEDRO CHIRIVELLA
Date of birth 23.05.97
Under-21s Apps 3 Goals 0
Under-18/19s Apps 14 Goals 0



MG: People want more and more. They don't want it to stop and that encourages the players.

How important is it to speak the language?

PC: I went to a school in Spain where I learned English so it wasn't too much of a problem for me. When I came to Liverpool I just needed a little practice.
SC: Knowing how to speak English makes life here at the Academy or away from football much easier.
MG: I have the lads here to help me if I don't understand. But I know I need to work on improving my English.
PC: Quite a few of the lads in the squad are keen to learn Spanish. We give them words and they've picked it up. Ryan Kent is probably the best Spanish speaker.

Who's your favourite player?

PC: Zinedine Zidane. I like Xabi Alonso too. I try to play like him, taking the ball from the defence and passing it around.
MG: Paul Pogba or Thiago Alcantara.
SC: David Villa, a few years ago he was brilliant. I liked the way he could go out wide and then pop up in the penalty area to score.

How did you find training at Melwood with the first team?

SC: At first you are very nervous, my legs were shaking. I looked around and saw players like Steven Gerrard and Luis Suarez. Normally, you'd only see them on the TV.
PC: But then you have a few touches of the ball and start to settle down. Just by being around them you learn more and you improve.
MG: Any time you play against senior players – like when we played Man United in the U21s and they had Victor Valdes and Anderson playing – it makes you better. You have to think quicker and that makes you better.

U21S FIXTURES

AUGUST		
19	Sunderland (A)	1-0
22	**Man United (H)**	1-1
SEPTEMBER		
12	West Ham (A)	4-0
25	**Man City (H)**	3-4
OCTOBER		
16	**Southampton (H)**	1-3
26	Fulham (A)	2-3
31	**Tottenham (H)**	2-1
DECEMBER		
17	Norwich City (A)	1-1
JANUARY		
26	Man United (A)	1-2
FEBRUARY		
7	Man City (A)	2-1
16	**Sunderland (H)**	1-0
MARCH		
2	**Chelsea (H)**	7pm
9	**Everton (H)**	7pm
16	Southampton (A)	2.30pm
20	**West Ham (H)**	7pm
APRIL		
6	**Fulham (H)**	7pm
13	Leicester City (A)	7pm
17	Tottenham H (A)	7pm
30	Everton (A)	7pm
MAY		
4	**Leicester C (H)**	7pm
11	**Norwich C (H)**	7pm
15	Chelsea (A)	7pm

U18S FIXTURES

AUGUST		
16	Stoke City (A)	1-7
23	**Derby C (H)**	2-2
30	**Man United (H)**	4-0
SEPTEMBER		
13	Middlesbrough (A)	2-3
20	**Bolton (H)**	3-0
27	Newcastle U (A)	5-1
OCTOBER		
4	**Man City (H)**	2-4
11	Wolves (A)	4-0
18	**Blackburn (H)**	5-0
25	Sunderland (A)	1-2
NOVEMBER		
1	**Everton (H)**	1-1
22	Derby C (A)	5-5
29	**Stoke City (H)**	2-0
DECEMBER		
5	Man United (A)	0-0
20	**Middlesbrough (H)**	4-1
JANUARY		
17	Bolton W (A)	4-6
24	Man City (A)	2-3
FEBRUARY		
14	**Sunderland (H)**	1-0
21	Everton (A)	0-5
28	**Newcastle (H)**	1pm



MORE THAN A FEELING

Simon Hughes recalls LFC's tough battles with a different type of football club

In 1994 Jose Maria Arrate, the wine-merchant president of Athletic Bilbao, pencilled an introduction for the club's centenary book.

'Athletic Bilbao is more than a football club', he wrote. 'It is a feeling – and as such its ways of operating often escape rational analysis. We see ourselves as unique in world football and this defines our identity. We do not say that we are either better or worse than others, merely different. We only wish for the sons of our soil to represent our club and in so wishing we stand out as a sporting entity, not a business concept'.

Arrate continued: 'We wish to mould our players into men, not just footballers, and each time a player from the *cantera* [youth system] makes his debut we feel we have realised an objective which is in harmony with the ideologies of our founders and forefathers'.

Michael Robinson, centre-forward-turned-Spanish television presenter and a player who spearheaded Liverpool's forward line when the Reds lined up against Athletic in the San Mames in 1983, says that the Bilbao supporters are the most knowledgeable fans in Spain.

"They call the San Mames the Cathedral and it's very similar to Anfield – they're loyal to their team but they applaud the rivals. The other good thing is that, along with San Sebastian [home of Real Sociedad], Bilbao has the best food and the best bars, and at half-time everyone gets their sandwiches out and their flasks of wine – you're not supposed to drink in a football stadium but laws are there to be broken.

"If I wanted to be drenched in an afternoon's football, the ideal day would be: wake up in Bilbao, read the press with a coffee while everyone around me is talking about the game, get dressed, have lunch – the best meat, the best tapas, the best wine, the best gin-and-tonics in Spain, the best cider – and then mosey along to *La Catedral*."

The original San Mames has gone now, with a new stadium built next door replacing it. Athletic's record of never leaving Spain's top flight remains, however. Athletic are the fourth most successful club in La Liga, indeed – with eight league titles and 24 Copa del Rey victories. In Europe they have finished as a runner-up twice, losing finals in the


La Chapela del Athletic
ATHLETIC CLU

Europa League and UEFA Cup to Atletico Madrid in 2012 and Juventus in 1977. Athletic have played Liverpool on two occasions, progressing in the Inter City Fairs Cup at the Reds expense in 1968 before losing in the aforementioned European Cup second-round tie in 1983.

The first encounter was determined by the draconian rule of a coin toss following 2-1 victories for each team in their respective home games and Liverpool's exit must have heightened manager Bill Shankly's suspicion of all things foreign.

Shankly had announced before the first leg at San Mames that he'd tailored the trip himself, as the delegation of 16 players and 10 officials set off in the days when Liverpool airport was known as Speke Aerodrome. "We have planned the training schedule so that the boys will have completed their preparation before they step on the plane," Shankly warned. "They will rest in Bilbao on Wednesday before the evening kick-off."

A day before the tie Alun Evans became the first £100,000 teenager when he signed from Wolves as a replacement for Tony Hateley, who was allowed to join Coventry City for £80,000. Shankly spoke of Evans' potential: "He is really something. He is physically strong and can only get better. Only the great ones are ready at 18. Like Finney he was playing in the Central League at 15."

While the players wandered around Bilbao, the *Liverpool Echo* interviewed a set of Liverpool-supporting brothers who arrived in the city after travelling from Ipswich where they saw the Reds grind out a 2-0 victory the previous Saturday. Peter and Keith Hughes of Hilberry Avenue in Tuebrook hitchhiked most of the way and walked 50 miles on the way to Orleans in France before reaching the Spanish border. After half-an-hour of the game that followed, they must have wondered why they made the effort.

Athletic opened the scoring through Estefanio after a mistake by Tommy Smith. Then Tommy Lawrence, failing to handle a shot from distance, allowed incoming forward Ornaza to hammer a volley into the net, as 'Athletic charmed us with their midfield skill and intricate footwork', the *Echo* wrote. Liverpool responded in the second half and after

The LFC travel itinerary from September 1968


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Inter-Cities Fairs Cup Competition

First Round — First Leg

Liverpool

v

Atletico Bilbao

(SPAIN)

WEDNESDAY 18th SEPTEMBER 1968

KICK-OFF 19.45 hrs.

"I'm not a butcher but Dalglish cannot expect any favours"

Kenny Dalglish in the goalless Anfield draw of October 1983

The original San Mames stadium

scoring through Roger Hunt, could have claimed a draw.

For the second leg, Bilbao welcomed back the Spanish league's leading goalscorer, Fidel Uriarte. Yet the *Echo* targeted goalkeeper Jose Angel Iribar as a key obstacle. 'As an international, he is unlikely to be put off by the crowd as can happen to a continental keeper used to pitches a long way from the fans, suddenly finding himself with the crowd almost on his back'.

Iribar was known as the 'Flying Angel' in contrast to Liverpool's Lawrence, the 'Flying Pig'. He said that the hostile environment inside Anfield did not faze him. "Liverpool did not play as skilfully as we expected in Spain. But their forwards are all pretty good and you have to keep an eye on all of them."

Liverpool had scored 10 goals in the two league fixtures between the first and second leg, beating Leicester 4-0 and Wolves by six. The glut encouraged supporters who were expected to sell out a 54,000 capacity at Anfield, meaning a new receipts record for the club. The previous record was £24,877 set up in the Cup Winners' Cup tie with Honved of Hungary three seasons earlier.

"In the name of fair play the farce of spinning a disc must end"



And the all-new Athletic home

When Arguitia rounded Lawrence to make the aggregate score 3-1 to Bilbao, it looked like the Basques would enjoy a secure passage to the next round but late goals from Chris Lawler and Emlyn Hughes clawed the tie level. In an era before penalty shoot-outs, Liverpool were then knocked out of the competition on the flick of a coin.

The *Echo* noted: 'In the name of fair play and everything football stands for, the Inter-Cities Fairs Cup committee must put an end to the farce of spinning a disc to sort out the winners of two evenly matched teams…surely a better method and much, much more relative to football can be devised to sort out draws'.

Maybe though it was Liverpool's turn to lose the toss. Four years earlier they had knocked Cologne out of the European Cup second round in a similar fashion.



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Bilbao's loyal fans

Fifteen years later Liverpool drew Bilbao again, this time in the European Cup. All of the pre-match talk involved the return of Andoni Goikoetxea to the Bilbao side. The Spanish international defender, who'd recently put Barcelona's Diego Maradona in hospital, earning himself an 18-match domestic ban, arrived on Merseyside with a reputation that he felt was unjustified. French supporters had chanted 'Assassin' at him in a recent international match.

"People have said I'm a butcher, but my message to Liverpool and Kenny Dalglish in particular is that they have nothing to worry about. I play hard but I'm not the kind of person that kicks people off the ball." The Bilbao tough-man knew his reputation might give him a psychological advantage. "Dalglish cannot expect any favours from me," he added.

Bilbao replaced two of their more creative stars in Argote and Sola, with two more defensive players. Future Spain boss Javier Clemente said, "We know that Liverpool will be fighting hard and we must play at full strength to get something for the return."

"I'd put Bilbao with us, Roma and Hamburg as the best left"

Reds boss Joe Fagan said: "The only certain thing is that it will be a cracking game. As champions of Spain they must have been better than the likes of Real Madrid and Barcelona. We must respect them and do our job."

Graeme Souness, Liverpool's captain, agreed. "I'd put Bilbao alongside Hamburg, Roma and ourselves as the four strongest left in the competition. If we do not match them in every department, then we know what to expect. They are a wee bit crafty so in that respect we have to watch ourselves a little bit more. But I don't expect a dirty game, just one in which if we don't give everything we will lose."

Bilbao played for a draw and got it with the first leg finishing goalless. Goikoetxea, like six of his team-mates, was booked in the game when he terminated a darting Ian Rush run.

'As early as the third minute we saw Gallego stretchered out as if he'd been run over by an 86 bus,' the *Echo* reported. 'The trainers pulled him to his feet and he staggered about like a drunk before being helped to the touchline for treatment. Gamesmanship it seems, is a vital weapon in the Spanish armoury.'

In the second leg two weeks later and immediately after a 6-0 win over Luton where Rush scored five, Liverpool travelled to Bilbao. It would have been easier to stop a runaway train that season and Rush scored decisively again to give Liverpool the lead with 20 minutes to go. He finished the campaign with 47 goals.

What they did next...



Jose Angel Iribar
Keeper from the 1968 tie. Aside from 614 games for Bilbao he also earned 49 caps for Spain. On retiring aged 37 in 1980, he was succeeded by Andoni Zubizarreta. Joined Athletic's coaching staff and became manager in 1986 for one season. Until 2010 he was in charge of the Basque national team.



Andoni Goikoetxea
The 'Butcher of Bilbao' left Athletic in 1987, joining Atletico Madrid where he stayed for three seasons. Subsequently, he has managed Salamanca (twice), Compostela, Numancia (twice), Racing Santander, Rayo Vallecano and Hercules. He also acted as assistant to Javier Clemente in charge of the Spanish national side at USA 94.



Javier Clemente
Clemete has held 18 different managerial positions since leaving Bilbao for the first time in 1986 (he has returned to the San Mames as manager on two occasions). His last role in Spain was in 2012 with Sporting Gijon. He currently manages the Libyan national team.



REA

Once, twice, three times for the Ladies? Liverpool are ready to defend their FA WSL crown as they



seek a third consecutive title. As the big kick-off looms, LFC Magazine previews the new season...

"This is the best group we've had"

Liverpool Ladies manager MATT BEARD looks ahead to the 2015 WSL season…

How has the pre-season gone?
I've been pleased. The international calendar makes pre-season difficult so we came in a bit earlier this year because last year I didn't feel we had long enough to prepare the players. We've changed one or two things this season as I felt we had to slightly re-invent the wheel to make sure we don't rely on the success of the last two years. We're going to be changing the style of play a little. There have been some exciting things to come out of pre-season and I'm looking forward to the competitive action starting.

You have made four new signings. Are you happy with the recruitment?
Definitely and having Nicole Rolser and Lucy Staniforth back effectively makes it feel like six signings. We had tried to sign the two Norwegian girls before and along with Satara (Murray) and Asisat (Oshoala) they are very exciting additions to the squad.

We tried to sign Line (Krogedal Smorsgard.) when I first came to Liverpool and were hoping to bring Ingrid (Ryland) in last season.

Ingrid is a fantastic signing. She has very similar qualities to Lucy Bronze in terms of her athleticism and is a quality player who is technically very good with both feet.

Line's come in and had one or two little niggles but she's a similar player to Nicole in terms of how she plays so she's another exciting addition.

We knew all about Asisat's quality and were in discussions with her before the Under 20s World Cup. She then had an excellent tournament and also a very good Africa Cup of Nations to put herself in the spotlight. She's only a young player but she's incredibly focused and wants to improve on last year, which is a testament to her character and the player she is. We've got a few things to work on with her tactically and technically but I think she's going to be a success for us this year.

"Last year was a big learning curve but we're all the better for that"

A good friend of mine at Washington Sprit, Mark Parsons, put me onto Satara. Once we received footage and saw her clips, we spoke to her and her university and it was a deal I was desperate to get done. In my opinion she's going to be one of the best defenders in our country. I think one day she will go to the World Cup with England as she has dual-nationality and wants to play for England. That's how good I think she is.

A number of young players have also forced their way into you thinking?
The experience of the girls who played with us last year has really helped kick them on. I'm really impressed with Ashley Hodson who is ready now to play first team football, as is Hannah Dale. Maz Pacheco and Mollie Green have also worked their way into our plans. When I've had the opportunity, I've enjoyed working with the youngsters and you can see their progression. We have 13 England players now from youth level to senior - when I came to the football club, we didn't have any. We've invested a lot of time into the development squad and the majority of those players have come through our youth system. Kevin Quigley and his Centre of Excellence team deserve a lot of credit for that.

Did the ups and downs of last season help you grow as a coach?
It's funny because as a coach you are always looking for new ideas. You can't get stale and, for me, last year was the biggest learning curve. We had to deal with long-term injuries, players going to the Under 20s World Cup in mid-season and so on. As a result, I'm probably now in the best place I've ever been as a manager and

feature photography by John Powell



Matt Beard is happy heading into the new season

coach. Last year was stressful but I'm confident with the squad we now have.

It's really difficult retaining your title but we did it and I think we can really enjoy this year - I believe this is the best group that we've ever had. I'm not saying I'm relaxed or taking my eye off things because we will always set our teams up to win football matches. We analyse the opposition but our game plan will always be to look at how we can exploit their weaknesses and nullify their strengths and make sure that whatever we do we win the football match.

Since I've been at the club we're at a 64% win rate, so I'm pleased with where we are at and with the focus of the players and their eagerness to be successful again this year.

The schedule seems better this season?
It does and the FA deserve credit for that. To be honest the demands in the previous three years have been difficult but the FA have listened to the club.

We'll have a lot more time to work with the players. We had a period last year where we had eight players out and another three who we were nursing through games. That makes up a whole 11 which is tough in a short season. It's going to be good to be able to put some work into the players. I think you could see the success in the second half of the season when we had more time to work with the players on a regular basis.

If the squad stays fit, do you think you can challenge for honours on all fronts?
I do. We've sat down and discussed our training expectations and what's expected of the players day in and day out and spoken about our expectations as a group and what we want to achieve. I'm confident that with this group we can be successful again over 14 league games and we desperately want to do well in the various cup competitions.

The support system at the club is helpful too?
Brendan Rodgers has been good in allowing me to speak to him and watch training when I can and the same has been the case with Alex Inglethorpe and Michael Beale at the Academy. The England women's set-up has also been very supportive since Mark Sampson has been in charge.

Women's football is different to men's but it's good to balance ideas, look at different systems, observe how they do it and whether there are tweaks you can make for the women's game. I'm fortunate in that I've got some of the best people in the business around me to call upon if I do feel as though I need any advice on anything.

Enjoying pre-season training at Widnes

Friends&foes

Gemma Bonner runs the rule over the Reds and their rivals ahead of the new 2015 FA WSL season

The Liverpool Ladies skipper has lifted the FA WSL trophy in each of the past two seasons. Here the central defender assesses Liverpool and their opponents…



Arsenal
Manager: Pedro Martinez Losa
Last season: 4th in FA WSL.

Arsenal brought in a new manager last year so probably went through a bit of a transition. They signed a lot of foreign players, and this season have brought in experienced attacking players. England striker Lianne Sanderson has come back from America to play for them and Natalia has come in from Bristol. I think they will be a force to be reckoned with, especially with the young English talent they've got coming through such as Leah Williamson.



Birmingham City
Manager: David Parker
Last season: 3rd in FA WSL.

Birmingham were up there last season and will have been disappointed to miss out on a place in the Champions League. They will feel that they have a point to prove. They have a talented squad with a lot of players in the England set-up. They certainly have the quality to be pushing for the top spots again this and will be looking to push on again and they will definitely be looking to get back into Europe.



Bristol Academy
Manager: Dave Edmondson
Last season: 7th in FA WSL.

Like Arsenal, Bristol were another team going through transition last season with a new manager. They have lost a few players but also brought in some new faces so it will be another new phase for them and they will be wanting to impress their manager. Their progress in Europe this year will be a big boost to their confidence. They have reached the quarter-finals of the Champions League and I'm sure they will put the experiences they have gained from that into the league programme. Once again we will play Bristol in our last league game – this time away – so hopefully there will be a

similar outcome to those of the last two seasons!



Chelsea
Manager: Emma Hayes
Last season: 2nd in FA WSL

Chelsea are another club to have made a number of signings. A lot of their newcomers are international players with a lot of experience and I think for them it will be a similar phase to that which we went through when we first came together in terms of having to blend the players together. They've definitely got the quality within the squad to be challenging for honours, it's probably just a matter of how soon they gel. They will be hurting after what happened on the final day of last season. They were in pole position to win the league going into the final round of games and will no doubt use that experience to spur them on this year.



Manchester City
Manager: Nick Cushing
Last season: 5th in FA WSL

City have made a host of new signings and the set-up they have there is comparable to anywhere else in terms of facilities. The players are in full-time now and with the squad they have I would be surprised if they don't challenge for trophies. They have brought in Lucy (Bronze) from us who will be a great addition and again it will be a question of how soon their team can gel. They have now got four of England's back five so they will be tough to break down, while they also have players who can score goals at the top end of the field. They showed what a good team they were last year by winning the Continental Cup when very few people expected them to pick up silverware in their first season in the FA WSL 1. They'll be using that to push them on this year.



Notts County
Manager: Rick Passmoor
Last season: 6th in FA WSL

Notts have made a lot of new signings. They have brought in good quality players including a couple from Chelsea. They have more players in full-time now which will help them. When you look at the strength of their squad it underlines that there aren't won't be any easy games in the FA Women's Super League.



Sunderland
Head coach: Carlton Fairweather
Last season: 1st in FA WSL 2

Having missed out on Super League status the first time around, Sunderland are another team who will feel like they have a point to prove. They are a squad that has been together for a number of years and they have enjoyed plenty of success in that time together. We have them in our first game on 25 March which will also be on television. I'm sure Sunderland will be looking to show everyone that they can build on winning FA WSL 2 last season and that they deserve to be members of the higher division.



Liverpool
Manager: Matt Beard
Last season: 1st in FA WSL

We're all really excited about this season. The new signings will all bring something different to the team. It's not the biggest squad we've had but I definitely think it's the best we've had in terms of quality and the options we have. A lot of the girls now have two years' experience under their belts and two years of being champions and I think that could be crucial this year. Hopefully we can manage the expectation of being champions again and we would also like to do well in the cups. We've been disappointed in the last couple of years not to progress further in the knockout competitions and while the league is again our focus, it would be great to have a good cup run. I've been to two FA Cup finals in the past but not won one yet so hopefully it will be a case of third time lucky. The cup competitions are massive as well in women's football so to do well in them is a big incentive for us.



Gemma parades the FA WSL trophy

THE 2015 INS & OUTS

Arsenal
Major ins: Lianne Sanderson (Boston Breakers), Natalia Pablos Sanchon (Bristol), Jemma Rose (Bristol).
Major outs: Yukari Kinga (INAC Kobe), Shinobu Ohno (INAC Kobe), Freda Ayisi (Birmingham), Niamh Fahey (Chelsea).

Birmingham City
Major ins: Alex Windell (Bristol), Freda Ayisi (Arsenal)
Major outs: None

Bristol Academy
Major ins: Hayley Ladd (Coventry City), Nadia Lawrence (IBV Vestmannaeyjar), Sharla Passariello (South Florida), Lauren Townsend (Cardiff City), Christie Murray (Arsenal).
Major outs: Natalia Pablos Sanchon (Bristol City), Jemma Rose (Bristol City), Corinne Yorston (Yeovil), Alex Windell (Birmingham).

Chelsea
Major ins: Gemma Davison (Liverpool), Millie Bright (Doncaster), Niamh Fahey (Arsenal), Hedvig Lindahl (Kristianstads), Marija Banusic (Kristianstads).
Major outs: Yuki Ogimi (VfL Wolfsburg), Rachel Williams (Notts County), Danielle Buet (Chelsea).

Manchester City
Major ins: Lucy Bronze (Liverpool), Demi Stokes (South Florida), Jennifer Beattie (Montpellier), Sarah Wiltshire (Yeovil), Nikita Parris (Everton, loan).
Major outs: Danielle Lea (Everton), Danielle Young (Everton)

Notts County
Major ins: Laura Bassett (Chelsea), Rachel Williams (Chelsea), Alex Greenwood (Everton), Jess Sigsworth (Doncaster), Leanne Crichton (Glasgow City), Danielle Buet (Chelsea), Fern Whelan (Everton)
Major outs: Emily Roberts (Doncaster Rovers Belles, loan)

Sunderland
Head coach: Carlton Fairweather
Last season: 1st in FA WSL 2
Major ins: Victoria Williams (Doncaster)
Major outs: Helen Alderson (Durham)

Liverpool
Major ins: Satara Murray (North Carolina Tar Heels), Ingrid Ryland (Arna-Bjørnar), Line Krogedal Smorsgard (Klepp IL), Asisat Oshoala (Rivers Angels)
Major outs: Amanda Da Costa (Washington Spirit), Lucy Bronze (Manchester City), Gemma Davison (Chelsea), Ellie Stewart (Everton), Megan Alexander (Everton), Claudia Walker (Everton)



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Let's 'three-peat'!

After back-to-back FA WSL titles, new signing Satara Murray wants to make it three in a row

Despite being born in Brooklyn and raised in Texas, thoughts of England have never been too distant from Satara Murray's mind.

The 21-year-old defender's mum hails from London and when the possibility of moving to the WSL emerged she was keen for her daughter to grab the opportunity.

"She's from Hackney and we regularly had British food when I was growing up so she thought coming here would be a good idea for me."

That was one opinion Murray listened to before making up her mind to leave University of North Carolina Tar Heels and cross the Atlantic.

"I was only focussed on staying in the States and the possibility of turning professional there. Then this opportunity came along. Some people thought I was too young to leave home. But I've already been away at college. So I thought what difference is more distance really going to make? Not many kids of my age can say they moved to England. So it wasn't a hard decision to make."

"When this opportunity came along it was not a hard choice to make"

And, although still at an early stage of her LFC career, Murray has found settling on Merseyside to be an almost flawless adjustment. "The transition to life here has gone well. The squad are very welcoming so I think that has made the whole process much easier. I already feel at home here."

As well as adapting to a new culture, new way of life and new housemates, Murray has also been adjusting to a new way of playing the game.

"It is a lot different [to soccer in America]," she says. "I was taken aback by it at first. The girls I played with in the States were good players, although the game there is probably more about being an athlete than here.

"I think the level in England is much more technically and tactically sophisticated. Players here read the game so well and know it inside out.

"I'm becoming more comfortable with how the manager wants us to play and think I've fitted into the team pretty well. The enthusiasm for the game here is contagious and makes you want to get more involved. I think coming to the WSL will help me to develop further as a footballer."

That hunger to become better and constantly improve has been part of Murray's character since she started playing aged five. Her pace, strength and ability on the ball are among the assets which convinced Matt Beard to add Murray to his consecutive title winning squad and she is keen to continue that success.

"We have the talent in the group to do well. It's just a case of getting it all to gel. We want to 'threepeat', that would be perfect start to my first year here."



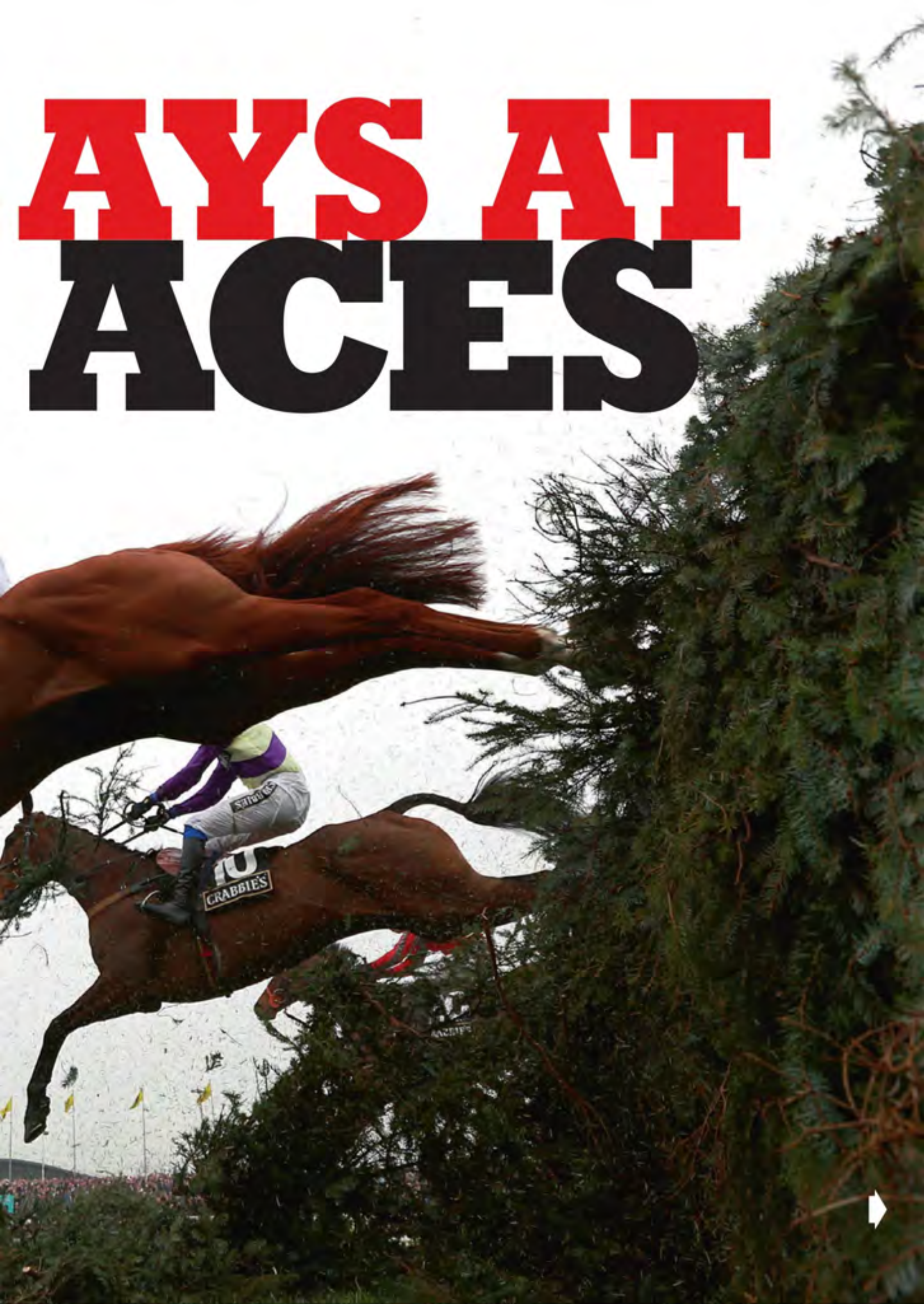
New arrival Satara Murray

LFC'S D
THE R

11 April sees the latest running of the Grand National, one of the best-loved events in the horseracing calendar. All eyes will be focused on Aintree, including the many Reds who share their love of football with the sport of kings. Terry McDermott spoke to www.jockeytv.net about his passion for racing



AYS AT ACES



You used to own Grade One hurdler, Intersky Falcon, whose notable wins included the Fighting Fifth and the Christmas Hurdle plus a third in a Champion Hurdle. How did you get involved? Alan Shearer was also involved?

TM: Yes, Alan was used to promote the syndicate in the early days. The media really bought into everything we were trying to do.

Alan stayed with the syndicate and, as we all did, enjoyed the many successes during Intersky Falcon's memorable racing career. It was a great thing to be involved with.

How does the thrill of winning a valuable race such as the Christmas Hurdle compare with your many football achievements?

TM: Richard Pitman once asked me the same question. I've won European Cups, league titles and so on, but the thrill of winning such high class races was something unique and special. We won two Christmas hurdles beating Champion hurdler Rooster Booster. Plus we won two very big races in Tipperary, beating top hurdler, Back To Front. They were wonderful memories and experiences.

It was just brilliant watching Intersky run in such big races. It's like having your children running round and you just want them to come back safe. However, to win such highly prized races…well, there's just no feeling like it. Whenever I'm feeling a little low, I'll get the DVDs of his races out, and it doesn't half make me feel good again, reliving those brilliant times.

Are you still involved with the Intersky syndicate?

TM: No. When I returned to management at Newcastle United in 2005, my connection with the syndicate finished. The horse also suffered from a windpipe problem.





Robbie, Macca & Crazy Horse

■ Many former players from the Seventies and Eighties have recounted tales of returning to the dressing room at half-time to enquire whether their selection had won the big 3pm steeplechase.

■ Michael Owen set up a company named Owen Promotions for his racing interests and cheered home Treble heights in a maiden race at Chester. He later had stables built at his home.

■ Kevin Keegan's wife owned Funfair Wane, a winner of the Ayr Gold Cup.

■ 31 March,1979 was a busy day for Emlyn Hughes – aka Crazy Horse, As well as an FA Cup semi-final against Manchester United to prepare for, he also had his thoughts on his runner in the National. Wayward Scot, part-owned by Red Rum trainer Ginger McCain, was a 100-1 shot and lived up to it's odds by falling at the first fence. It had been quite a week for Emlyn. His testimonial with Borussia Moenchgengladbach had been staged at Anfield on the Tuesday.

To celebrate the event, the Emlyn Hughes Handicap Hurdle was named in his honour and staged at Aintree on the Friday before the National.

■ While at the club Steve McManaman and Robbie Fowler became racehorse owners with



Terry with jockey Liam Cooper and Intersky Falcon after victory in the Christmas Hurdle at Kempton Park in 2003

"The thrill of winning high-class races was something unique and special"

We tried to fix it but, alas, he was never the same. He got beaten in a chase by a horse who should never have beaten him. Jonjo O'Neill rang me suggesting we retire him as he'd done us proud. As soon as Jonjo said that, that was it, we retired him. He owed us nothing. He's now living with his former jockey, Liam Cooper, who is now a farrier, in Cumbria. I often go along and see the horse when I'm in the area. I'm honoured to be able to call Jonjo a true friend. I've known him 40 years since he was a jockey and he's never changed. I've total respect for those in racing especially National Hunt jockeys. These guys hold no fear. It's a tough, tough world. People like AP McCoy have teeth hanging out, jaws broken, cuts and stitches, yet they want to carry on riding.

Racing has produced some superstars in recent times such as Frankel and Kauto Star. Do you agree that the new rising stars such as Sprinter Sacre or Simonsig can follow them at the top of the jumping game?

TM: It's funny you mention those two, Sprinter Sacre and Simonsig. There's also David Pipe's Dynaste. These are great horses and what a race that would be between Sprinter Sacre and Simonsig. Whenever these horses are running, I always ensure I tape the race. Like Best Mate and Kauto Star, these horses can go on to be legends within the racing world.

Somebody once suggested that Kevin Keegan loved horseracing but would never bet more than a fiver. Is that really the case?"

TM: No, rubbish! I remember a time in the '80s where me and Kevin decided to pool some cash to use in order to utilise our inside knowledge of the racing game. At the time I was quite friendly with Pat Eddery. We thought we were pretty savvy regarding horseracing. So we thought, yeah.. great idea. We'll put two grand each into a joint account and try and build that up to 10, 15k then share it out. Yeah, brilliant. So we opened an account in a Lloyds Newcastle branch. 4K straight in. Then after just three weeks, all the money had gone…the lot! Kevin's a very shrewd guy, but he'd have more than a fiver... perhaps he'd stretch to a grand!





a string of fillies in the all-white colours of The Macca and Growler Partnership. Their first was named Some Horse because it tickled Fowler to think it may romp home to victory accompanied by the commentary: '… and Some Horse is the winner.' David Thompson was another owner during his time with the Reds.

- During his playing days, Terry McDermott owned 'More For England', shared with Emlyn Hughes and Alan Kennedy, trained by Ginger McCain at Southport.
- Terry recalled happy memories of mad dashes from Anfield to Aintree. He said: "We'd play of a Saturday morning with an 11am kick-off, the game would be finished by 12.45 and we'd be straight in the bath and at the track by 1.30pm."
- Aintree racecourse and sponsors Crabbie's officially marked the 25th anniversary of the Hillsborough tragedy last year by renaming the opening race over the Grand National fences as The Crabbie's Supporting The Hillsborough Families Fox Hunters' Chase. The track also marked the anniversary with a 20ft floral display reading 'Aintree Supports Hillsborough 96' at the racecourse entrance. A minute's applause for Hillsborough victims and campaigners was also held before the first race came under starter's orders on Grand National day.



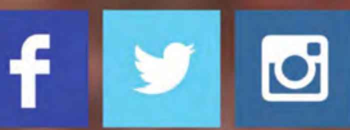


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Neil MELLOR

As a young player you have to take the rough with the smooth



A 3-0 away at Barnsley. It might have been an Under-19s game but that defeat will always stick with me. I can still remember it clearly. My Liverpool team-mates and I knew we'd performed poorly as we trudged off the pitch at the final whistle and coach Steve Heighway told us exactly that afterwards.

In fact he went even further. He said in no uncertain terms that losing in such a way was completely unacceptable for any Liverpool team. We might have been young lads but he didn't spare us. As a punishment we were made to come in for extra training the next day.

Over the long term the defeat did us good because we learned from it and then went on a great run and ended up winning the league later that season. We reacted well to what happened and that's my point.

Every player will suffer a heavy defeat at some stage in their career. It's guaranteed. The Under-18s experienced that recently when they lost 5-0 to Everton.

Nobody's time in the game goes: success, success, success and more success. There will be as many downs as there are ups along the way. We've seen in this season's FA Cup just how unpredictable football is and that an unexpected result is always possible in almost any situation.

How you deal with such setbacks often defines whether you become a success and fulfill your potential or – as is the case for some young lads – drift out of the game completely.

Steven Gerrard and Jamie Carragher are perfect examples of what I'm talking about. They are Liverpool legends. But I'm sure both of them would say that life as a footballer isn't always smooth and they've played in games where the team has lost heavily. It's not just bad results that players have to cope with. There are injuries, loss of form, making a mistake or being in the team one week and out the next. The list is endless. Handling those disappointments is a big part of the game. You can't afford to dwell on anything for too long.

"Dwell on a mistake and you lose your focus – you have to move on"



The U18s will learn from the recent derby defeat

That applies even more when you are actually out on the field. If you make a mistake that leads to a goal – which happens in a lot of games – you can't spend the remaining minutes thinking about it because that means you aren't properly focused. You have to continue trying to produce your best to help the side.

Or if the team is down by a few goals you can't lose your composure, get frustrated and end up being sent off. That helps nobody and will probably lead to an even bigger defeat for your team-mates.

It all means players have to be mentally stronger than ever. They have to be able to control their emotions because if you are unreliable then you are no good to the manager or the team. You won't be picked any more.

Instead you have to react well to adversity. If you go out of the Youth Cup, as the Under-18s did against Birmingham, it's a major disappointment and you need to respond. If you are left out of the team you have to play so well when you next get a chance that the manager won't even contemplate not picking you again in the future.

The level of that response is what defines great players. They have such character and are so mentally strong that they are able to quickly put a disappointment behind them and react to it in a positive way, sometimes in the space of just a few minutes.

There are many talented young players in the Liverpool Academy and they can't let the disappointments that come along affect them too much. Getting to the first team is a tough journey, but it's definitely worth all the effort.

Follow Neil on Twitter @NeilMellor33

The KOP

83 GREAT CAUSE
Charity run taking place this April

The bit at the back for Liverpool FC's legions of fans at home and all over the world…

THE MONTH AHEAD

MAR

Manchester men

The Reds will host both Manchester clubs during March aiming to avenge away defeats earlier in the season. Following the visit of title-chasing City on the opening day of the month, Liverpool entertain United on the 22nd in a 1.30pm kick-off.

The corresponding game at Old Trafford back in December saw Brendan Rodgers introduce his 3-4-3 system for the first time and although the Reds suffered a 3-0 defeat, the signs of the improvement to come were there for all to see.

The latest episode in one of British football's great rivalries takes place at Anfield with the hosts hoping to get the better of Louis Van Gaal's side in the Dutchman's first managerial engagement at Anfield.

LFC will be hoping for a repeat of last season's meeting in L4 when Daniel Sturridge's goal secured a 1-0 victory.

"Louis Van Gaal will manage a team at Anfield for the very first time"


Steven Gerrard in action at Old Trafford



BIRTHDAY REDS

Simon Mignolet 27 on 6 March
Brad Jones 33 on 19 March
Jerzy Dudek 42 on 23 March
Djimi Traore 35 on 1 March
Joey Jones 60 on 4 March
Kolo Toure 34 on 19 March
Joe Allen on 25 on 14 March
Danny Murphy 38 on 18 March
Gordon Milne 78 on 29 March
Jordan Rossiter 18 on 24 March
Lazar Markovic 21 on 2 March
Kenny Dalglish 64 on 4 March
Fernando Torres 31 on 20 March
John Toshack 66 on 22 March
Fabio Borini 24 on 29 March



Anniversaries

48 years since Emlyn Hughes made his debut on 4 March
89 years since Gordon Hodgson scored his first LFC goal on 10 March
6 years since the Reds defeated Real Madrid 4-0 on 10 March
18 years since that 4-3 win over Newcastle on 10 March
3 years since Steven Gerrard's derby hat-trick on 13 March
6 years since the 4-1 win at Old Trafford on 14 March
38 years since that epic 3-1 win against St-Etienne on 16 March

Liverpool introduced a 3-4-3 formation at Old Trafford

Champions begin

Liverpool Ladies begin their quest to win a third consecutive FA Women's Super league title when they host Sunderland on Wednesday 25 March. The newly-promoted Black Cats visit the Select Security Stadium in Widnes with the action getting underway at 7.45pm. Reds' manager Matt Beard is expecting a tough contest. "I am delighted we will begin the season with a home game and hopefully we can get a great crowd. Sunderland Ladies will provide us with a stern test as they are an exciting, young side so we will need to be fully prepared."

LADIES 2015 FIXTURE LIST

MARCH			
Sun 22	tbc	FAC 5	
Wed 25	SUNDERLAND	WSL	7.45pm
APRIL			
Wed 1	BIRMINGHAM	WSL	7.30pm
Sun 12	If qualify	FAC 6	
Sun 19	Chelsea	WSL	2pm
Sat 25	MAN CITY	WSL	5.30pm
Wed 29	Man City	WSL	
MAY			
Sun 3	If qualify	FAC SF	
JULY			
Sun 12	Arsenal	WSL	2pm
Sat 18	NOTTS CO	WSL	5.30pm
Thu 23	Everton	CC	7.30pm
Sun 26	Birmingham	WSL	2pm
Thu 30	Doncaster RB	CC	7.45pm
AUGUST			
Sat 1	If qualify	FAC final	
Sat 8	Sunderland	WSL	6.30pm
Sat 15	DURHAM	CC	5.30pm
Sat 22	BRISTOL AC	WSL	5.30pm
Wed 26	SUNDERLAND	CC	6.30pm
Sun 30	Man City	CC	2pm
SEPTEMBER			
Sat 5	ARSENAL	WSL	5.30pm
Sat 12	If qualify	Cont Cup QF	
Sat 26	CHELSEA	WSL	5.30pm
OCTOBER			
Sun 4	Bristol Ac	FWSL	2pm
Wed 7	tbc	UCL R32 1L	
Sat 11	If qualify	Cont Cup SF	
Wed 14	tbc	UCL R32 2L	
NOVEMBER			
Sun 1 or 8	If qualify	Cont Cup final	
Wed 11	If qualify	UCL R16 1L	
Wed 18	If qualify	UCL R16 2L	

*home games in red

Season-tickets for 2015 are priced at £30 for adults and £15 for children under 16 and concessions. Family tickets (two children and two adults) are £60. The tickets include entry to all seven WSL fixtures plus home FA Cup and Continental Cup matches. They can be purchased online at www.liverpoolfc.com/ladiestickets.





JOIN RUN FOR THE 96

Alan Kennedy and Graham Stuart set for 5k legacy event

Two former greats from Liverpool and Everton put their allegiances to one side during derby week to support a new community running event remembering the 96 Liverpool fans who lost their lives at Hillsborough.

Alan Kennedy and Graham Stuart joined forces at the Isla Gladstone Conservatory – located in Stanley Park between Anfield and Goodison – to back the inaugural Run For The 96 5K which will take place at 9.30am on Sunday 19 April. Their support follows the announcement that the event's official charity partners are the Liverpool FC Foundation and Everton in the Community – with all funds split equally between the two charities. The fun run also has the support of the Hillsborough Family Support Group, and all finishers will receive a medal and commemorative t-shirt.

Alan commented: "I am delighted to be a part of Run For The 96 and I'm looking forward to seeing all the red and blue runners coming together to show their support."

The event is the brainchild of Dom Williams, a Liverpool fan who has staged the three-day Hillsborough-Anfield 96-mile team-running challenge for the past three years. This year, the main run will be 70 miles over two days, with the third day being the Run For The 96 5K in Liverpool. The change of format is Dom's vision to create a legacy event to involve the wider community. To find out more about the event, log on to www.btrliverpool.com.

SEASON-TICKET HOLDERS

As a Season Ticket Holder there will be times when you cannot make it to a Barclays Premier League home match due to holidays or other commitments. If so, don't let your seat go empty and lose out on the opportunity to receive credit against the cost of your Season Ticket next summer.

Use the online Ticket Exchange service to release your ticket. You can use this service as many times as you want during the season.

For more information regarding the Ticket Exchange please visit: www.liverpoolfc.com/tickets/ticket-exchange.



FIXTURE LIST 2014/2015

AUGUST

17	Southampton (H)	2-1
25	Manchester City (A)	1-3
31	Tottenham Hotspur (A)	3-0

SEPTEMBER

13	Aston Villa (H)	0-1
16	PFC Ludogorets 1945 (H, UCL)	2-1
20	West Ham United (A)	1-3
23	Middlesbrough (H, COC 3)	2-2*
27	Everton (H)	1-1

OCTOBER

1	FC Basel 1893 (A, UCL)	0-1
4	West Bromwich Albion (H)	2-1
19	Queens Park Rangers (A)	3-2
22	Real Madrid (H, UCL)	0-3
25	Hull City (H)	0-0
28	Swansea City (H, COC 4)	2-1

NOVEMBER

1	Newcastle United (A)	0-1
4	Real Madrid (A, UCL)	0-1
8	Chelsea (H)	1-2
23	Crystal Palace (A)	1-3
26	PFC Ludogorets 1945 (A, UCL)	2-2
29	Stoke City (H)	1-0

DECEMBER

2	Leicester City (A)	3-1
6	Sunderland (H, 3pm)	0-0
9	FC Basel 1893 (H, UCL)	1-1
14	Manchester United (A)	0-3
17	Bournemouth (A, COC 5)	3-1
21	Arsenal (H)	2-2
26	Burnley (A, 3pm)	1-0
29	Swansea City (H, 8pm)	4-1

JANUARY

1	Leicester City (H, 3pm)	2-2
5	AFC Wimbledon (A, FAC 3)	1-2
10	Sunderland (A)	0-1
17	Aston Villa (A)	2-0
20	Chelsea (H, COC SF 1)	1-1
24	Bolton W (H, FAC 4)	0-0
27	Chelsea (A, COC SF2)	0-1*
31	West Ham United (H)	2-0

FEBRUARY

4	Bolton W (A, FAC 4R)	2-1
7	Everton (A)	0-0
10	Tottenham Hotspur (H)	3-2
14	Crystal Palace (A, FAC 5R)	2-1
19	Besiktas (H, UEL, R32)	1-0
22	Southampton (A)	2-0
26	Besiktas (A, UEL, R32)	

MARCH

1	Manchester City (H, 12pm)	
4	Burnley (H, 8pm)	
9	Blackburn Rovers (H, FAC 6, 4pm)	
12	Europa League round of 16 (1)	
16	Swansea City (A, 8pm)	
19	Europa League round of 16 (2)	
22	Manchester United (H, 1.30pm)	

APRIL

4	Arsenal (A, 12.45pm)	
13	Newcastle United (H, 8pm)	
16	Europa League quarter-finals (1)	
18	Hull City (A, 3pm) / FA Cup semi-finals	
23	Europa League quarter-finals (2)	
25	West Bromwich Albion (A, 3pm)	

MAY

2	Queens Park Rangers (H)	
7	Europa League semi-finals (1)	
9	Chelsea (A)	
14	Europa League semi-finals (2)	
16	Crystal Palace (H)	
24	Stoke City (A)	
27	Europa League final	
30	FA Cup final	

* LFC won on penalties

All kick-off times are BST. All Barclays Premier League fixtures are subject to change for the requirements of television and/or for other reasons such as police requests.

 Please check **www.liverpoolfc.com** for the latest details as and when they happen.

Daretodream

To mark International Women's Day on 8 March we spoke to Liverpool Ladies' four new signings about their career paths...

SATARA MURRAY



Why did you choose to move to LFC this season?

I chose to join Liverpool because of the history of the club both on the women's and men's side. I thought being a part of something this big couldn't get any better and not many people get opportunities like this. It really is a once in a lifetime sort of opportunity and I had to take it.

Can you please tell us about your background?

I am from Austin, Texas in the US and I attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill for the last four years. Playing for (coach) Anson Dorrance was probably one of the best things that happened in my life and he allowed me to grow as a player and as a person.

INGRID RYLAND



Why did you choose to move to LFC this season?

I chose Liverpool because it is a great club with high ambitions and the right environment for me to develop further as a footballer and human. The opportunity to play football professionally for one of the greatest clubs in the world is a dream come true.

Can you please tell us about your background?

I started playing when I was five with the local boys team in Norway. From there I always had a dream and inner drive that I would turn pro. I signed for the top team; Arna Bjornar in 2007 at 17 years old. Away from football, I have taken a bachelor degree in change management.

ASISAT OSHOALA



Why did you choose to move to LFC this season?

Liverpool has been a club I have loved for a long time when I was growing up in Nigeria, so it wasn't difficult for me to choose to come here. I love and enjoy the organisation of the team and the amazing style of football that we play. The methods of coaching here are very good too.

Can you please tell us about your background?

When I left school I decided to join a club in my state in Nigeria, from there I joined River Angels where I played for two-and-a-half years before I came here to England. I had a great tournament at the recent Under 20s World Cup which was one of the most exciting things I have done in my career.

LINE SMORSGARD



Why did you choose to move to LFC this season?

Liverpool have always been my favorite club in England, so when I got the opportunity to play for the club myself it was like a dream came true. I started to play football when I was nine-years-old and have always wanted the chance to play professionally so this is fantastic.

Can you please tell us about your background?

I grew up in Stavanger in Norway. I studied child welfare for three years at the University of Stavanger and combined being a footballer and working in a school. It was hard combinig both but I enjoyed working with children who had some difficulties.

What challenges have you faced in your career?

Any advice on how to become a footballer?

One of the biggest challenges that I have faced is having confidence in my abilities in football. I overcame that by gaining the trust of my teammates and that then led me to believe in myself. Getting to the point where my mother doesn't have to work any more is what motivates me.

I've had lots of good advice in my career. The best is if you really want to be a successful footballer, make sure it's what you love to do and not because someone is telling you this is what you need to do. Do what you love and love what you do. If you do that then you will go far.



I try to work hard every day to become a better player. Right know I am writing my masters thesis at the same time as doing a lot of training. That can sometimes be a bit challenging. I am getting more used to it day by day. A normal day for me includes both training and study.

For me, challenging myself and my body to see how far and how much potential is possible to reach is quite fascinating. I am highly motivated to be the best I can be so I would say work hard and be determined. And don't be afraid to dream. You never know, your dreams may come true.



At first my parents wouldn't allow me to play football. But when they saw how serious I was about it they changed their mind. Moving to England recently, I would also say the weather sometimes because it isn't as cold as this in Africa. I'm told it will get warmer!

The great support from my fans always encourages me go on the pitch and perform better and I know that will be the case here at Liverpool with the great fans. But I would say to anyone that they shouldn't give up on his or her dream and keep believing. Everything is possible.



I have been really lucky and I haven't had any big challenges in my career to this point. But I always try to stay positive and if there are any challenges that I have to face, I will try and do so with that mindset.

Always aim to be a better footballer, work hard and enjoy playing. Personally, my teammates motivate me everyday. It is easy to get motivated when you work in a group that really wants to become better each day. So learning from others is also important.





Liverpool FC Foundation is the official charity of Liverpool Football Club. We deliver a range of initiatives that inspire people from all walks of life to make positive change happen for themselves and their communities. Follow us on Twitter @LFCFoundation.



Youngsters and coaches at the half-term camp

Joe joins the fun

Reds midfielder teams up with thrilled local youngsters at half-term multi-sports camp

Reds midfielder, Joe Allen, joined a group of local youngsters at Anfield Sports and Community Centre in enjoying an LFC Foundation half-term multi-sports camp.

The midfielder took part in a skills and drills warm-up with a group of participants and later hosted a question and answer session.

He was also on hand to present all of the participants with some LFC goodies as well as signing autographs and posing for pictures.

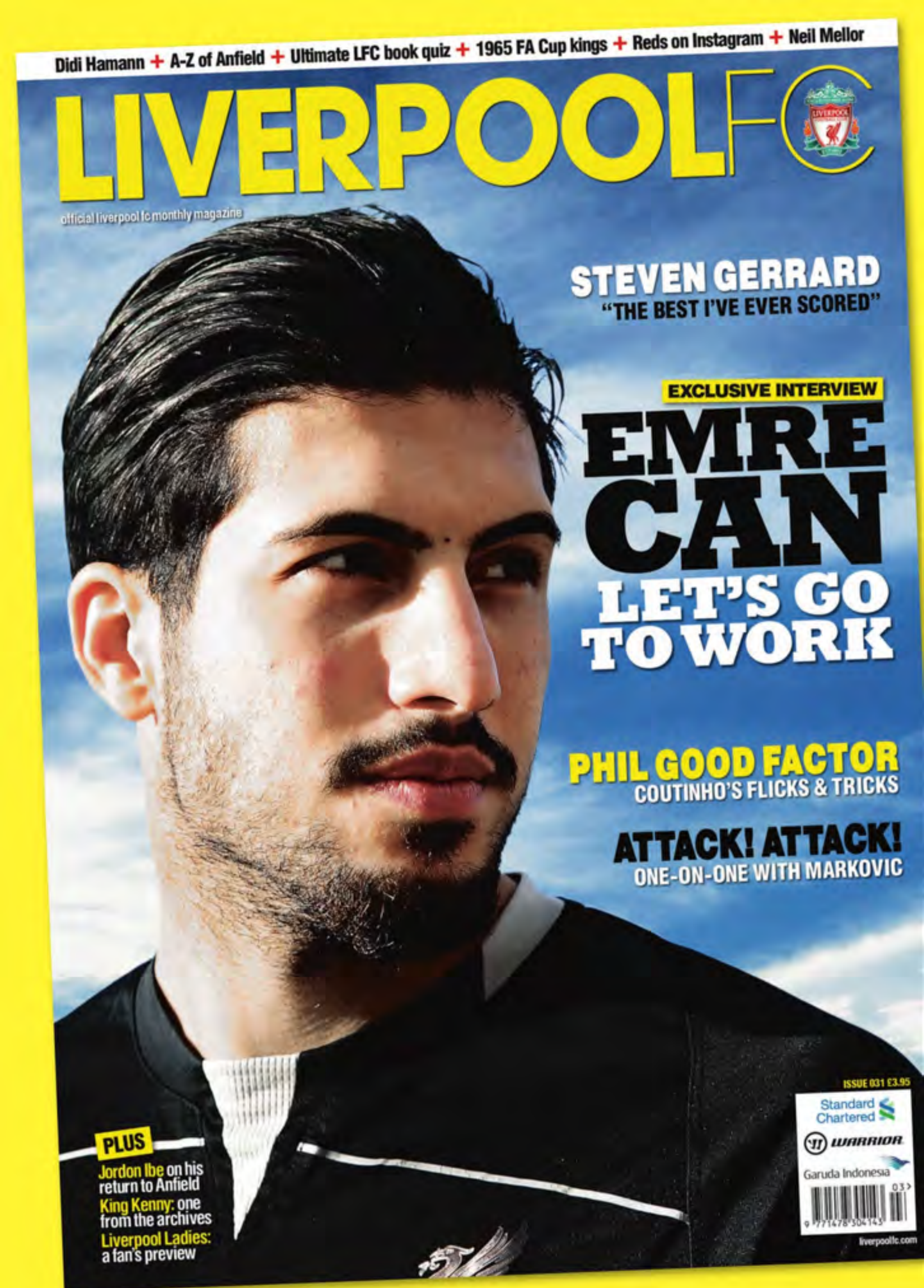
Joe said: "It was great to see the youngsters playing different sports and making the most of their half-term holiday. I really enjoyed taking part in some of their activities and sharing my passion for sport with them."

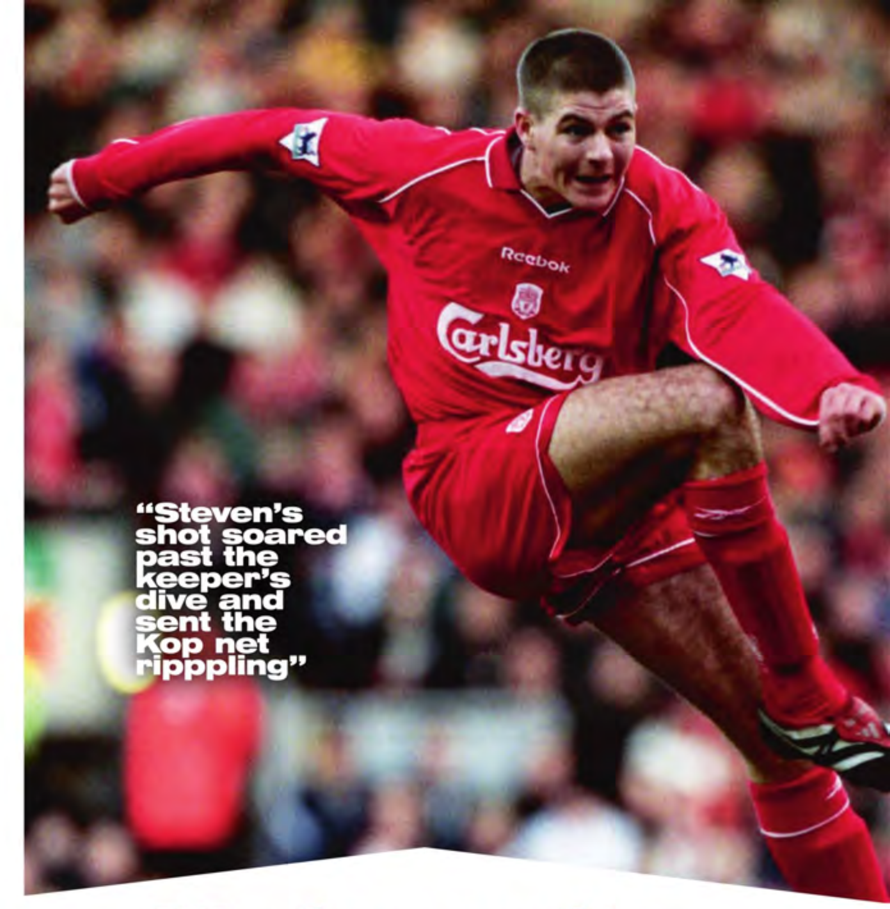
Throughout the February half-term week, the Foundation delivered various camps to provide local youngsters of all abilities with some active, creative and fun activities.

The Foundation's education centre, Reducate, which is based at Anfield Stadium, hosted a series of arts and crafts sessions,while multi-sports camps ran at both Anfield Sports and Community Centre and Rainhill High School.



Joe takes part in a kickabout


Didi Hamann + A-Z of Anfield + Ultimate LFC book quiz + 1965 FA Cup kings + Reds on Instagram + Neil Mellor
LIVERPOOLFC
official liverpool fc monthly magazine
STEVEN GERRARD
"THE BEST I'VE EVER SCORED"
EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
EMRE CAN
LET'S GO TO WORK
PHIL GOOD FACTOR
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"Steven's shot soared past the keeper's dive and sent the Kop net ripppling"

My favourite Gerrard moment

NEW YEAR CHEER 01.01.01

The magazine's editorial team pays tribute to Steven Gerrard in a new series, which continues with William Hughes rewinding to the first day of 2001

There are moments in sport which simply take your breath away. Snapshots in time that remind you what kindled your love of a game in the first place.

For me, 2001 began with just such an occasion as Liverpool kicked off the year with a home fixture against Glenn Hoddle's Southampton.

This was Steven Gerrard's second full season in the first team and the talent so many people had talked about was beginning to manifest itself on the senior stage.

As Gerrard walked out at Anfield that afternoon, he was midway through his 21st year, with a CV showing two England caps under recently departed manager Kevin Keegan. He had played 66 times for the Reds, scoring a handful of goals. Yet this was the day that convinced me this lad was the real deal.

Lining up alongside Gary McAllister, a man almost 16 years his senior, in the heart of the



Liverpool midfield, Gerrard proceeded to produce a barnstorming display against the Saints.

I was in the Upper Centenary Stand, a perfect vantage point to see him receive possession 35-yards from goal. Making light of a muddy, bobbly post-Christmas surface, he shifted the ball to his right, striding purposely past the loose marking of Southampton striker Kevin Davies and then…

The footballing fraternity has a varied vernacular for what happened next. Humdinger, scorcher, ripsnorter, howitzer, piledriver, onion-bag bulger. Take your pick.

Thirty-yards from goal, Gerrard let fly with a right-footed version of what Roy of the Rovers readers would recognise as 'Racey's Rocket', the comic-strip hero's signature strike from distance.

In the seconds that followed Steven's shot soaring past the hapless dive of Paul Jones and rippling the Kop net via the underside of the crossbar, my Dad - sat to my left - turned to me. Our eyes instantly conveyed the sense of wonder at what we'd just witnessed.

Another Gerrard (sic), Liverpool manager Houllier, described it as "an amazing goal, maybe the best of the entire season."

A dozen minutes into the match the young midfielder had taken it by the scruff of the neck and imposed his sheer force of personality on it – displaying all the makings of the boy who would be king. The Times' match report of the game further underlined those burgeoning qualities.

'More moments of (Gerrard) brilliance were to follow. There was a 70-yard pass that landed on Vladimir Smicer's instep, an impudent back-heel into the path of McAllister and, as his confidence grew, an increasingly arrogant swagger that would have done Graeme Souness proud.'

Southampton manager Hoddle, no mean midfielder himself, was ebullient in his praise after the game: "He plays with his head up and he's a terrific talent with a very bright future."

Very bright indeed. A local lad who would go on to captain the team he grew up supporting to a string of successes on home turf and foreign fields, while also representing his country well over one hundred times, many as skipper.

Real Roy of the Rovers stuff.



Carra on the cover of the matchday programme

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LOVE FOLLOW CONQUER

The Club launch an exciting new collaboration with the LFC-inspired clothing label

LFC Retail has teamed up with LFC-inspired clothing label *Love Follow Conquer* to create an exclusive range of menswear for fans.

Love Follow Conquer was founded by Liverpool FC fan Ian Maloney four years ago through a love of football, fashion and music. Each piece is timeless and pays close attention to detail with signature colour tipped collars, bespoke branded fastenings and embroidered accents.

The *Love Follow Conquer* brand is now hugely popular among fans. Brazilian midfielder Lucas Leiva has also taken an interest in the brand by purchasing the popular *Love Follow Conquer* Leiva T-Shirt.

The official collaboration takes its inspiration from the club's five European Cup victories.

The best-selling Bruges '78 polo, available in red, white and blue, takes its name from the Reds' second European Cup victory against Club Brugge on 10 May 1978 at Wembley, and features the collaboration logo – a hand print design inspired by Steven Gerrard's iconic celebration that represented LFC's five European wins.

The long-sleeved Real '81 polo celebrates the Reds' third European Cup after beating Real Madrid 1-0 in Paris on 27 May 1981. Available in red and navy, the polo is made from a fine knit with the *Love Follow Conquer* signature placket fastening and LFC detailed buttons.

The Benfica '84 sweater recalls the 1983/84 European Cup quarter-final against Portuguese champions, Benfica. After a 4-1 victory and beating Dinamo Bucuresti in the semis, the Reds went on to with their fourth European Cup.

The Milan '05 tee, available in white, blue and grey, celebrates the events of 25 May 2005 at which Liverpool reclaimed their crown as 'Kings of Europe' after miraculously overcoming a 3-0 half-time deficit to defeat AC Milan in Istanbul. It was after this fifth European Cup triumph Gerrard began celebrating with his hand to represent LFC's five wins, inspiring the design of the Milan tee and Benfica sweater.



1 Bruges '78
Polo, £28



2 Milan '05
Tee, £20



3 Benfica '84
Sweater, £35



4 Real '81
Polo, £35



The collection is exclusively stocked by the Official LFC Online Store and at the Official LFC Club Stores at Anfield, Liverpool ONE and Williamson Square. For more details visit liverpoolfc.com/store or follow @LFCRetail on Twitter and Instagram.

THE APPLIANCE OF SCIENCE

Reds' backroom staff publish papers on groundbreaking training research from Melwood



The Reds' sport science team, from left: James Morton, Barry Drust, Jordan Milsom, Ryland Morgans, Tom Brownlee, Andy O'Boyle, Patrick Orme, Dave Rydings, Liam Anderson, Olly Morgan and Rob Naughton

Liverpool FC's backroom sports science team has conducted pioneering research into modern training methods. Staff at Melwood have produced a number of peer-reviewed articles that will ultimately improve the Reds' knowledge of the game, supporting the manager and players. The research was conducted by all full-time fitness staff at the club plus consultants Professor Barry Drust and Dr James Morton.

The sports science team works very closely with Brendan Rodgers, the coaches and physiotherapists. The fitness and sports science staff monitor the physical condition of players' training and preparation as well as providing Rodgers with information about recovery times.

"Our role is to develop individual programmes for players, making sure they are conditioned to deal with the physical demands of the manager's tactical strategy, which includes a high press when out of possession, and quick explosive transitions," says Ryland Morgans, head of fitness and conditioning at LFC.

"We believe science underpins football and aim to generate research that develops our knowledge of the game and our players' responses to training and match-play."

The research articles from within the department are unrivalled in Europe. Most importantly, the scientific findings are used to support decisions made by Rodgers and his staff to help achieve on-pitch success.

Morgans adds: "One paper that stands out is from the last Christmas period where we monitored our senior players. There is a marker of your immune system called IGA which is sensitive to training-load and overall stress. We gauged the players over a seven-game period in 32 days to see how they responded to playing, not playing and general demands over the congested winter schedule where there were short recover periods.

"That information also enabled us to look at nutritional aspects for each player and assess training modificaions to allow for full recovery and prepare for the next match."

The papers have been published in journals around the world and will benefit those involved in the scientific rationale behind practice plus fans interested in the science of football.



Xabi Alonso Instagram

@xabialonso14


8 January 2014
Throwbackkkk



2 January 2014
My hero. My mate.


28 December 2014
2014 memories



29 December 2014
Fans voted for their favorite Bundesliga XI, and here is it!



20 December 2014
Throwback



25 November 2014
#MCFCFCB


21 November 2014
Exclusive interview with Jamie Carragher


20 November 2014
Get well soon!


22 October 2014
Meeting the Pope.


16 October 2014
Felicidades @17arbeloa! Ya son 10 años con el Real Madrid


5 October 2014
Beckenbauer at Oktoberfest



10 September 2014
With Stevie


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L.F.C.
#DEMAND
77
78
81
84
05
10/4
'14
Standard Chartered



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